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POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX

DOCTOR WHO...STAR TREK : NEXT GENERATION...
BLAKE'S 7...KOLCHAK...LAND OF THE GIANTS...

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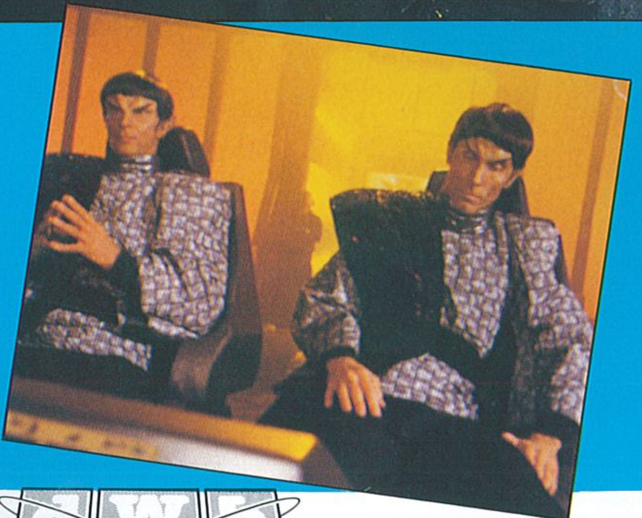

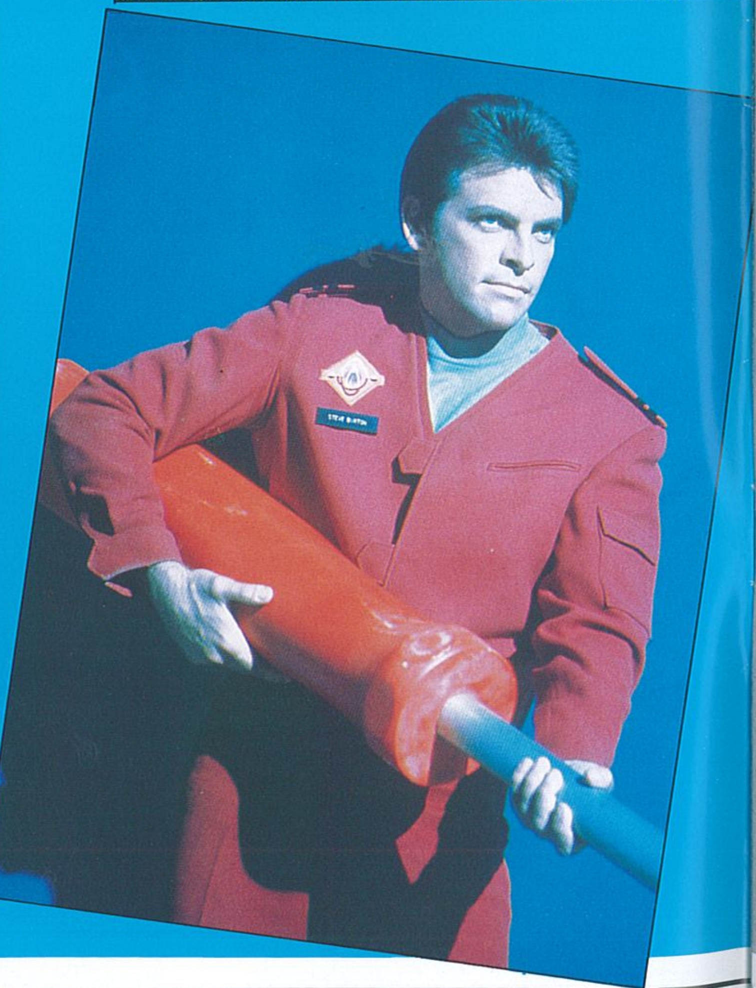

editorial

The Journal of British Fantasy Television
P.O. BOX 1015, BRIGHTON BN2 2YU

THE END of another year signals the arrival of another D W B readers poll. This is your chance to tell us whether you have enjoyed our change of direction over the past twelve issues and what further changes, if any, you would like to see. As previous results have demonstrated, we are quick to respond to the majority consensus, but sadly the returns each year is poor to say the least and so the results aren't as conclusive as they could be. Please help put an end to this general apathy that exists in SF fandoms and set aside half an hour to help shape your magazine. That is all it takes, believe it or not!

In all this has been a fairly nondescript year on the telefantasy front, but this should change in 1990, especially if we eventually get to see 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' on television, and not to mention the changes in store for 'Doctor Who', of which an announcement is now due at the end of January.

It's hard to believe but John Nathan-Turner is now completely relinquished of his responsibilities to 'Doctor Who' which, for the time being, remains producer-less. In my mind JNT will be remembered more for the commercialization of 'Doctor Who' during the eighties than anything else, which is neither a good nor bad thing. On the one hand this has led to the virtual raping of the show's innocence as businessmen pushed and shoved to cash in on the show's increasingly high profile, especially in America where this was exemplified none better than by the D W F C A circuses of the early-mid eighties, the club's intentions of which always seemed highly dubious to say the least. On the other hand JNT is to be thanked for transforming the series into such a marketable product - albeit complete with the showbiz trimmings he presumably deemed necessary to take it there - as this has made it virtually immune (as proven by the events of the past few months) from cancellation. Now, if only he could have spent a bit more time making sure his latter script editors toed the line...

Last issue we invited you to bid on a Cyberman helmet, the proceeds of which - after the initial cost of the mask had been deducted - would have been donated to Children In Need. Unfortunately we have had to withdraw the helmet from sale for the time being.

Finally I would like to congratulate our contributors Brian Robb and Brigid Cherry on their decision to tie the knot and, of course, wish all readers a very Merry Christmas and/or A Happy New Year (depending on when you read this!).

Enjoy this 'Yeti Special' and see you next decade! GARY

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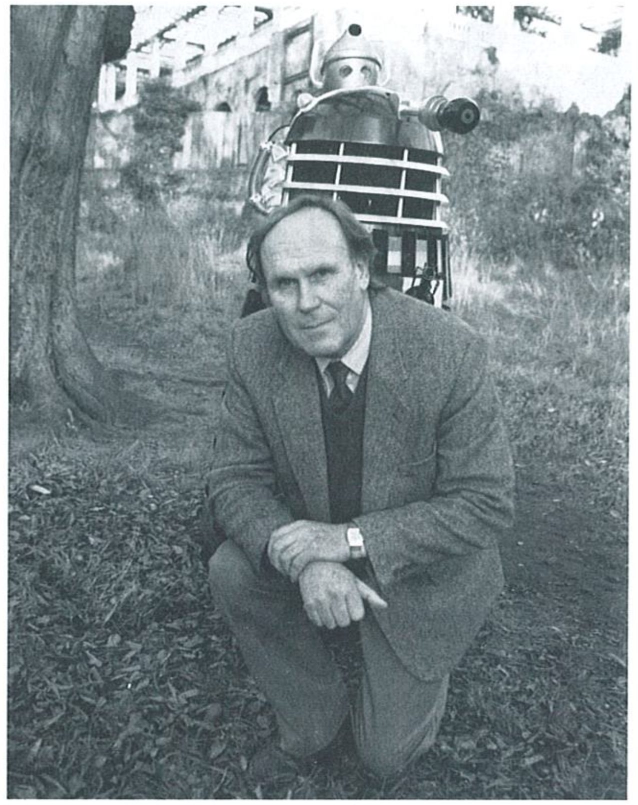
WHO news

MONSTER-MEN BID FOR 'WHO



ANOTHER FRONT-RUNNER has emerged in the quest to take 'Doctor Who' into the next decade.

Gerry Davis and Terry Nation, two of the most famous names from the series' past, have combined forces in a bid to take on the show. If they succeed they will not only bring with them a wide experience of TV production, but also a large investment from one of several interested American backers.

POSITIVE MEETING

Gerry Davis, who co-created the Cybermen as well as script-editing **Doctor Who** at the end of the Hartnell/ beginning of the Troughton eras, has already had a very positive meeting with new BBC Head of Serials Peter Cregeen, and he is currently in the States getting a possible co-production package together.

Several major American companies have expressed a serious interest in co-financing the show, including Columbia and Disney, but the aim would be to make the series over here and to retain its fundamental 'Britishness' whilst bringing in a more direct and dynamic storytelling style.

NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations are at an early stage, but so far things look very positive - after all, what could stand in the way of the combined strength of the Cybermen and Daleks ?!

Next month we have an exclusive interview with Gerry Davis where he talks at length about what he would do with the show if his bid succeeds. These plans include having the whole production shot on film, a wider use of foreign and exotic locations, and an increased episode count. Who could ask for more ?

Photo: Gerry Davis and friends assembled at Hampstead Heath in November to plan their quest...

Stage and TV Today report: Pp.4

FAREWELL NATHAN-TURNER

HAVING COMPLETED pre-transmission dubbing work on 'Survival', John Nathan-Turner finally left 'Doctor Who' at the end of November.

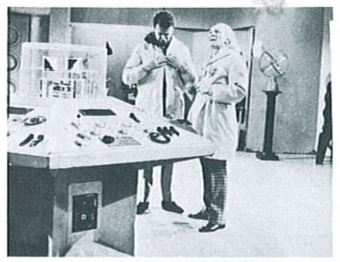
He didn't quite reach his tenth anniversary landmark - he took up the post on December 7th, 1979!

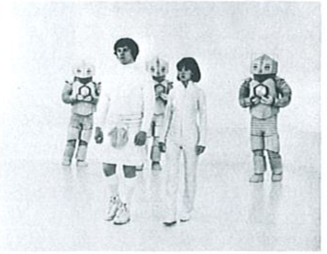
He is still at the BBC where he is involved in the development of ideas for new shows.

NO MORE JNT - OFFICIAL!

The BBC press office has categorically stated that JNT's association with **Doctor Who** is at a complete end, and also revealed that news of his successor(s) will now not be known until early 1990...

DOCTOR WHO VIDEO BONANZA TO RELIEVE 1990 HIATUS





BBC VIDEO have announced a stunning line-up of new 'Doctor Who' titles to fill the gap left by the unavoidable 1990 hiatus.

And after the runaway success of **The Daleks** twin-tape pack last June, it isn't surprising to learn that all new titles hail from the sixties!

Confirmed for February is the four-episode **An Unearthly Child,** the first-ever **Doctor Who** story, and the ten-part **The War Games,** the last adventure made in black and white. The latter will be released over two tapes, and with photographic reference material - particularly colour - decidedly lacking for these stories, popular artist Alister Pearson has designed and painted the covers for these tapes.

BEEB VID BOW TO PRESSURE

Also definite are new, **unedited** versions of **The Five Doctors** and **Brain of Morbius** in June, the latter of which we are informed will also retain its individual episode titles. These two releases indicate that BBC Video are not blind to criticism, and will occasionally bow to pressure. However they will inevitably be rewarded with most fans sure to re-purchase complete editions.

There are more, tentatively scheduled titles also lined up for 1990 release. Banking on the runaway success of **The Daleks,** the six-part **Dalek Invasion of Earth** was bound to materialise sooner rather than later, and is mooted for April release along with the five-episode **The Mind Robber** - the most popular of the existing Patrick Troughton adventures. That the former is to be released over **two** tapes, as will be **The Web Planet** when released, hopefully, next September along with the Troughton five-parter **The Dominators,** is suspicious to say the least, though it is anticipated that they will be available at £14.99 instead of £19.99. **The Mind Robber** and **The Dominators** will each be released on one tape apiece.

OPEN TO QUESTION

IN EARLY JANUARY, D W B is to interview BBC Video. If you have any questions regarding BBC videos, please send them to the editorial address a.s.a.p.

WITH ALL THE UNCERTAINTY voiced in the press of late regarding **Doctor Who's** future, it made a change to see the following two pieces in (left) The Stage And Television Today (November 30th) and The Radio Times Letters Page (Nov'25-Dec'1):

SYLVESTER McCOY

Doctor goes independent

DOCTOR Who, the BBC's longest-running drama serial, may be tendered out to an independent producer from next year.

And sources close to the show predict that changes in the regular cast may be made under the auspices of a new production team.

It is thought that an independent producer would probably look to produce as many as 26 episodes a year, twice as many as the BBC presently puts out, to meet the demands of the American market.

Among the parties believed to have expressed interest in taking the programme on are Saffron Productions, which last week won an International Emmy award for its arts documentary Gwen – A Juliet Remembered, and Cinema Verity, the company founded by the first ever Doctor Who producer, Verity Lambert.

Other people involved in the earlier days of the science fiction show who are understood to be looking at the possibility of producing it include Gerry Davies, a former Doctor Who script editor and creator of the cult sixties drama Doomwatch.

The option of an independently-produced Doctor Who was raised by Peter Gregeen, head of drama serials at the BBC.

A Corporation spokesman told *The Stage and Television Today* that the decision on the programme's future was being taken in the light of the BBC's commitment to using independent producers for a quarter of its total television output.

Although the show may be shot outside the Corporation, it will remain a BBC programme. Doctor Who remains one of the biggest moneyspinners in British television.

Doctor Who . . . the future

The current *Doctor Who* adventure (Wednesdays BBC1), *The Curse of Fenric*, looks like being one of the very best McCoy stories. Word has it, however, that ratings for the new season have been poor. The fault lies not with the programme but with its scheduling against *Coronation Street* on ITV. Tuesday at 7.00 or Sunday at 7.15 would be much better slots.

Doctor Who is part of British culture and deserves to continue. The new movie and the fact that it is BBC Enterprise's biggest seller are just two points in favour of a new season next year. Rumour has it that the next series may be produced by an independent company. This, along with an increased episode count, could do the series a world of good.

Axing *Doctor Who* now would leave a gap in many people's lives. It has a lot more left in it than certain situation comedies the BBC insist on bringing back again and again.

D. I. Wheeler
Penrith, Cumbria

☐We want Who

I hope that Jonathan Powell gets the sack as soon as possible as Controller, BBC1. His decision to axe *Doctor Who* at the end of its present series shows that he doesn't understand what people really want. We want *Doctor Who* to continue.

Alan Dobbie
London N22

☐Dead of neglect

I'm sure most people are aware that *Doctor Who* is in its final year. More than likely it will be axed before or during December. After 26 years the time-travels on television will be frozen within a time-warp. Does the BBC actually care though?

I do, in fact, feel very bitter at the BBC's dismissive attitude towards the programme: it receives a relatively small budget, it is placed against *Coronation Street* on a Wednesday, it has little or no coverage from *Radio Times*.

Simon Allen
Harrogate, North Yorkshire

PETER CREGEEN, Head of Series, Drama, Television, replies: *I would like to reassure 'Doctor Who' devotees that there are no plans to axe 'Doctor Who'. There may be a little longer between this series and the next than usual, but I very much hope that it will continue to be as successful in the 90s as it has been for the last 26 years.*

FURTHER to last month's news that new satellite company BSB have bought the rights to show "early" 'Doctor Who', we have since learned that this includes every story currently residing in the BBC archives - from William Hartnell up to Sylvester McCoy!

The deal was part of a £3 million package entitling BSB to screen a plethora of BBC programmes when its five stations commence transmission next March. There is no news yet as to when and which **Doctor Who** will be screened, but it will be shown on the Galaxy channel, described as 'Entertaining viewing for the whole family'.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO B S B

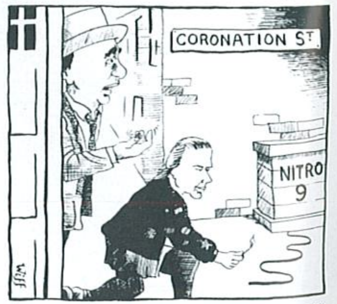
When eventually made available, BSB's 'squariel' dishes will be priced at £250-300, but as a special introductory offer, if you enrol with a £10 deposit **before January 31st,** BSB will refund £170 of the price. Installation varies from nothing (if you do it yourself!) to £80 or £90. In effect this will enable you to view pristeen quality vintage **Doctor Who** stories for as little as £80, as well as being able to receive sport, music, news and arts channels, plus the movie channel costing £9.99 per month after 6pm or free up to 6pm!

SEASON 26 STUCK IN 4 MILLION RUT

SEASON 26 continues to show a disappointing return on the ratings front, with figures for 'The Curse of Fenric' still hovering around four million:

Ghost Light(1)	4.2m
Curse of Fenric(1)	4.3m
Curse of Fenric(2)	4.0m
Curse of Fenric(3)	4.0m
Curse of Fenric(4)	4.2m

Adding insult to injury, Coronation Street has been boasting of its phenomenal success by taking out a page ad in the trade journal Broadcast, also highlighting the fact that the series is fast approaching its 3000th episode **and** its thirtieth anniversary!!



"QUICKLY! BEFORE SOMEONE SEES US!"

LIS TURNS OUT FOR MEGA QUIZ '89

Report by Adrian Farmer

WHO FANS from across the Midlands, and beyond, descended on Aston University, Birmingham, on November 18th for an event with a difference.

Not only did Mega-Quiz '89 provide some very different entertainment to the usual convention scene, but it boasted (thanks to organiser Dan Rowley) an impressive guest line-up.

RARE APPEARANCE

Most noted of these was Elisabeth Sladen - the most popular of companions - on a very rare visit to a **Doctor Who** related event. She was happy to sign autographs for all the attendees, as well as help in the auction and raffle. Of the quiz, she said: "I'm enjoying it very much - it was very nice to be invited. It's very kind of everyone to give such an enthusiastic welcome, and remember Sarah with such warmth."

Lis explained her reasons for staying away from the **Doctor Who** convention scene for so long: "I've not been to many at all since our little one was born. But Sadie is four-and-a-half now - in the last few years I've just had better things to do. For this trip I've managed to combine the two - my husband comes from Birmingham, so Sadie's gone to see her grandma."

Her husband is, of course, Brian Miller of **Snakedance** and Dalek-voice fame, and he was present signing autographs. Continuing the Dalek link was Terry Molloy leading the East Midlands team with DWM editor John Freeman leading the West Midlands team, who went on to win the event.

Appearing as quizmaster was John Nathan-Turner, this really being his last appearance as producer. He had been dreading being quizmaster for the event, but had been pleasantly surprised: "At least I don't have to answer any questions!" JNT fully supported the quiz, citing it as an excellent alternative to a run-of-the-mill convention.

About £330 for charity was raised by the Mega-Quiz in all, and an Ultra-Quiz is now planned for the future involving many more teams and celebrity leaders. "Stay tuned", as one of the guests was heard to say...

NEW BOOKS

W.H.ALLEN have announced their 1990 'Doctor Who' schedule which, as always, is bound to chop and change.

For the first time in years, there will be a three month gap during the summer in which no new titles will be published. 1991 looks even bleaker on the book front with no new stories aired in 1990. However editor Peter Darvill-Evans has lined-up five large-format book ideas which, he plans, will be released at intervals up to 1993.

1990's SCHEDULE:

Jan: **Planet of Giants**(Dicks)
Feb: **Happiness Patrol**(Curry)
Mar: **Space Pirates**(Dicks)
Apr: **Remembrance**(Aaronovitch)
May: **Curse of Fenric**(Briggs)
Jun/Jul: -
Aug: **Mission to Magnus**(Martin)
Sep: **Battlefield**(Aaronovitch)
Oct: **Ghost Light**(Platt)
Nov: **Survival**(Munro)
Dec: **The Pescatons**(Pemberton)

Dr.Tulloch is working on a sequel to The Unfolding Text. Titled The SF Audience, it will include a look at the sub-culture of SF fandom...

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DWB

SYLVESTER UNDERMINED BY GHOST OF SEASON 24

Tim Munro, West Yorkshire (15-11-89)

It's a shame that my head-over-heels admiration for the brilliant **Ghost Light** puts me in the company of people such as Clinton R. Lakin (Your View, DWB#72). Fans who accept everything at face value really do make life terribly easy for the writers that have penned the last few seasons. I quote: "The Doctor's wisdom is more than a match for any would-be antagonist, and...if he needs to resort to dubious, or even supernatural lengths to defeat them, why shouldn't he ? After all, he is **the Doctor**".

Gosh, that makes writing **Doctor Who** easy, does it ? No need to rationalise anything, no need to **prove** the Doctor's a genius. Taken to its limit this could lead to stories where the Doctor arrives, takes one look at the villains and simply incinerates them with magical death-rays from his eyes.

The Doctor is not a supernatural being. He doesn't **believe** in the supernatural (remember **The Daemons** ?). And as one lady on the Whose **Doctor Who** documentary in 1977 pointed out, the fascination of the Doctor is that he **cannot** magically evaporate out of situations (**or** turn metal into swords in a flash). He survives by his wits and his knowledge and, like Sherlock Holmes, half the fun is watching him at work.

So, contrary to Clinton's assumptions, I expect the traditionalist lobby will be delighted with **Ghost Light** because here, for the first time, McCoy's Doctor had to **work.** He has to deduce what's going on and find a solution - it isn't all explained with "I was here before and there's this all-powerful Time Lord device which I left lying around here and which can solve the whole problem...".

"General lack of coherency", Mr.Lakin ? **What** general lack of coherency ?! It all seems **very** coherent to me; it's the most carefully constructed script in years! Everything that we need to know is explained, and the mysterious points don't really matter to our understanding of the story. (This is **very** different from the way writers like Kevin Clarke use "mystery" as an excuse for their own inability to construct a plot which isn't riddled with more holes than a pair of fish-net stockings!).

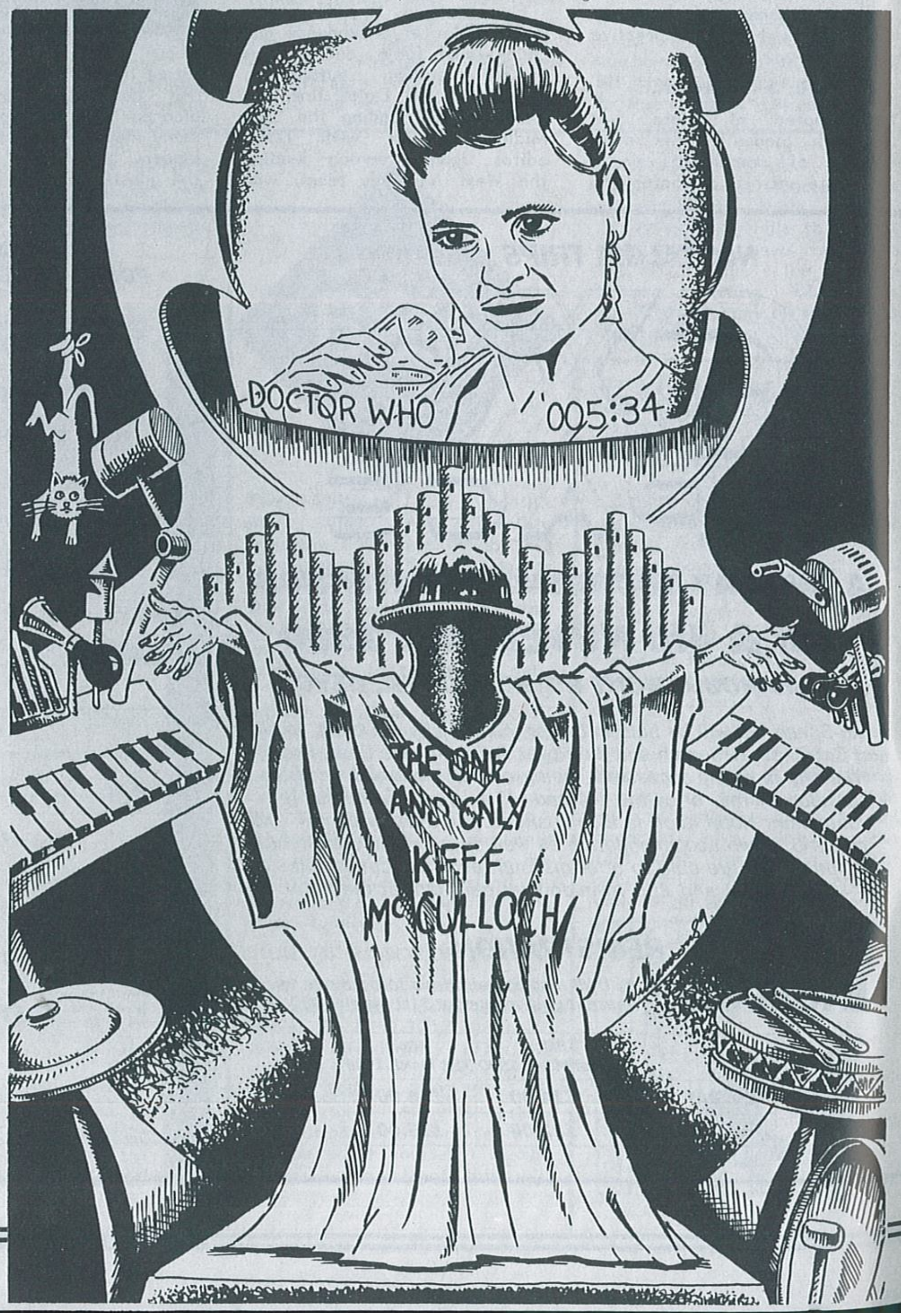
Whether the Cartmelites like it or not, **Ghost Light** was the best story in years because it was the first **real Doctor Who** story in years! The "new approach" has been quietly removed - they'd never admit it, but it was. **Ghost Light** was traditional **Who.** It was, in fact, what we've needed all along - the old style; brushed up a bit, slightly reassessed, but basically the old style with a shining new coat of paint, ready for the 90's.

Incidentally, I agree entirely with David Waddell and Kenneth Horlock (letters) about that wretched title sequence. **Battlefield** aside (that **was** vacuous, glitzy junk and suited the title sequence perfectly), Season 26 has given us a shift back to atmospheric gothic horror - with Powell's influence lessened, **Doctor Who** has shown every sign of becoming drama again. The title sequence was hopelessly out of place on **Ghost Light** and **Fenric,** and with **Fenric** part four consisting of mass-slaughter of the cast it seemed extremely sick to launch it with McCoy winking and grinning inanely at his audience, as if we're all in for a jolly good laugh. In fact it's sad that Sylvester's improved performance this season is continually undermined by the ghost of his Season 24 persona leering out of the title sequence every week! 'Cacophony' McCulloch's bouncy theme music doesn't seem quite right for the show anymore, either - time for Mark Ayres to have a go, I think!

PUBLICITY ? WHAT PUBLICITY ?!

Phillip Hayes, West Midlands (26-10-89)

The new season of **Doctor Who** has finally arrived (and gone). It has ? A 45-second trailer immediately after Sorry! the week before heralded its imminent arrival. It did ? Admittedly the trailer was repeated, but it would hardly encourage casual viewers to tune in. Who edits these trailers ? Shots of knights in armour falling over with a resounding clang to Keff McCulloch's 'backing music' (and I use the term loosely) isn't exactly inspiring. Add to that half a page of childish hyperbole by 'Ace' at the back of the Radio Times and you have the complete B B C pre-Season 26 publicity. Is it any wonder that episode one of JNT's "ratings grabber" grabbed only 3.1 million?


DOCTOR WHO
005:34
THE ONE AND ONLY KEFF McCULLOCH

"For this quiet, mellow part of the episode, I think I'll give it THE FULL WORKS!!"

David Hookham, Leicester (25-10-89)

So, Doctor Who is threatened with the axe once again, at least according to the papers. No doubt, if the newspapers pestered the B B C for a quote, they would dig up the stock phrase "Sci-fi is not popular - just look at the ratings for **Doctor Who**"! The fact is the ratings would be far higher if they actually **admitted** to the series, rather than hiding it away, then sneaking it on at a time when they know most 'normal' people are watching Coronation Street. One trailer I saw went out at quarter past midnight on September 27th! As for episode two of **Battlefield,** why did they bother ? After all the fuss about **Fenric** over-running and "Could we have an extra episode, please ?", and here we have the most blatant example of pure padding since the whole of Season 23. "When I say run...**run!**" I wonder if the catch-phrase from this season will be "Oh, **shame**"?!

DOES JNT REALLY WANT WHO BEHIND HIM?

Andy McKinney, Kentucky, USA (31-10-89)

I'd like to put my "two cents" about the proposed tenderisation. I think it is a wise move. **Doctor Who,** as it is now, has gotten to the point to where it needs overhauling. Sylvester's Doctor knows too much (the only thing he didn't know last season was the Daleks' ability to hover!), too many "off the wall" story ideas (I guess people have run out of good drama ideas), and ever since the beginning of the JNT era (at least) the TARDIS works only too well (remember the early days when the only way Hartnell could determine where he was was to go outside and find out first hand ?). Add to that the awful logo and wink, the low episode count (no wonder PBS affiliates are dropping **Doctor Who**), and the loss of filming on location (not JNT's fault, but it only helps make the show look even cheaper). It is definitely time for a change, but **why,** if JNT **really** wanted to put the show behind him, did his own company bid for the show?!!

I believe it would be **very** foolish of the B B C not to commission longer seasons. If for no other reason, they'll have that much extra material to make a killing overseas. It might even get PBS stations interested again (as long as the B B C don't keep hiking prices). Less importantly, I would like to see the programme on film again (**Spearhead** was absolutely beautiful). It doesn't just look nice, but it conceals things such as cheapness of sets, etc.

PS: In **The Twilight Zone** article (DWB#71) Rod Serling's name was mis-spelt twice, though this is not uncommon (I know a few people who mispronounce it as "Sterling").

Jason Wilson, Norwich (29-10-89)

The news that **Doctor Who** is to go independent is very welcome, despite a year with no new stories being aired. The series desperately needs a new approach, so I hope that John Nathan-Turner's company isn't chosen, even if he did return it to the standards of Season 18 and the Davison era. The first move of any incoming producer must be to junk all this "The Doctor is more than just a Time Lord" crap and return to the good old days when the Doctor didn't know anything before landing the TARDIS!

Jonathan Morris, Somerset (31-10-89)

Is it indicative of the B B C's current opinion of **Doctor Who** that every Monday night on Telly Addicts a Dalek is seen being destroyed by the Starship Enterprise ? It's rather upsetting in a way.

"CIC HAVE MISHANDLED ST:NG VIDEOS"

Jonathan Hayward, Channel Islands (17-11-89)

I agree with every word of Tim Munro's article on the treatment of **Star Trek: The Next Generation** by CIC Video (DWB#72); out of a wide selection of friends and contacts I know of no-one, not even die-hard Trekkers, would even **consider** buying these ludicrously-priced cassettes. Surely CIC must have realised with the popularity of the budget releases of the original series that there is much more money to be made in this way than the rental market ? I for one would have shelled out £9.99 fairly regularly to have a neatly packaged first generation copy of the series. I really can't complain too much, though. I may be living on an island with a population of only 2,000, but our one video rental shop stocks every episode and gets each new tape within a week of its release as they are extremely popular.

Glenn Curtis, Kent (19-11-89)

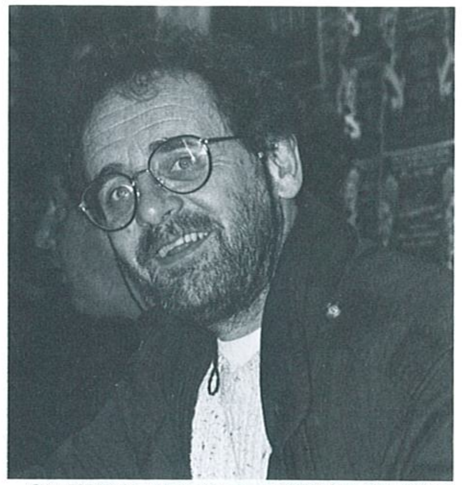
I must say I totally agree with the sentiments expressed by Tim Munro in his article: **Star Trek: The Present Degeneration.** I think CIC have completely mishandled the videos of the series. I would certainly have bought the tapes had they been at a sell-through price and the episode not been edited together.

I believe that the B B C has already banned the episode **Conspiracy** so you can bet that the scissors will be out and the rest of the series will be heavily edited before we see the episodes. It may be a good idea to try and find out from the B B C why they insist on moving the opening titles from after the teaser to the start of the programme. Do they think the audience is unable to determine what they are actually watching ? Incidentally, **Star Trek** is not the only programme they do this to; others include Mission Impossible and Ironside.

LONGLEAT '83 REVISITED

Andrew Trowbridge, Dorset (19-11-89)

Your coverage of DWM's 10th anniversary sign-in was most interesting since I was unable to get in! I joined the seemingly endless queue dead on 12 noon, but by 2.30pm I, with others, was somewhat annoyed and went to the Space Adventure Exhibition to kill time. At 4.00pm we rejoined the queue only to be turned away as it had apparently "been closed". Although I did manage to get a written apology from John Freeman, I shall only be attending another DWM "organised" event if they promise to pay my travelling expenses!



SYLVESTER AT THE SIGN-IN, SPORTING A JNT GROWTH

John Freeman, Editor, DWM (17-11-89)

Many thanks for your recent DWM coverage, especially the Marvel signing. With regard to your report, I agree the Café Munchen was not the best venue, but based on the numbers expected (Forbidden Planet usually get 400 people at similar events, at most), it seemed suitable. We also made a considerable mistake in splitting the signing times - something with hindsight that I hope we'll **never** do again! In terms of size of venue, I had tried to organise an event at the Westminster Comic Mart, but it seems the Methodist Central Hall nowadays have an aversion to Daleks!

Sylvester McCoy and JNT continued the signing for three hours longer than they were originally asked, so everyone who stayed in the queue was catered for. For that, they should earn a tremendous amount of respect. Their concern for the fans who waited so long for autographs can hardly be doubted.

With regard to your comment about the party for the "select few", this party was for contributors to the Magazine over the last ten years as well as people who are currently helping DWM with its articles on the programme such as Elisabeth Sladen, Barry Newbery and others. This was a cheap shot and not worthy of your usual reporting.

ED: I would like to assure John that no "cheap shot" was intended. "A select few" was a description innocently used simply to indicate that a party was held after the throng had dispersed, though in hindsight I appreciate it could be interpreted in this way for which I apologise.

D W B's 'LOST IN SPACE' MENTALITY

Simon Thomas, Middlesex (21-11-89)

My main complaint about D W B at the moment is the tasteless design of the covers. Ever since regular colour covers began, they have suffered from a **Lost in Space** mentality of using as many colours as possible. To elaborate: With #72 it is a known fact that red and pink clash, and on #70 purple and green are not complimentary **and** you used a red title, not to mention multi-coloured commentary along the bottom. An easy way to resolve this would be to limit yourself to three or four colours on a page.

Another criticism is the pathetic content of #72's letters page. With a few exceptions, they were the most pessimistic selection of regurgitated D W B articles I've seen. I suggest you only print such letters if strictly necessary, otherwise you will bore other readers to tears. Try cutting down on the colour and gloss a bit.

ED: I take your point, Simon, though with last issue we felt a tasteless clash of colours would be appropriate to see JNT off with!

CARTMEL's SUBTLE ANTI-RACIST TONE

James C.Armstrong, Jr., USA (23-11-89)

In the Spring of 1987 I wrote an article describing rasicm in **Doctor Who** which appeared in newsletters in the States and Canada. I was critical of several aspects of the show and recommended that the next companion be cast from a minority group. While Ace is not black, her character is sympathetic to people without regard to race or colour, and has made several strong comments against racism. My other big concern was the treatment of minority characters in the stories. The biggest changes were noticeable in Season 25, with Andrew Cartmel's style as script editor bringing in some strong stories with a subtle anti-racist tone. **Remembrance of the Daleks** is a superb example with the Daleks fighting a civil war solely between two different races of Daleks. More obviously, black actors have been given a chance to appear in good, sympathetic rôles. I hope it continues to move this way.

PETER BRYANT

YOU STARTED your working life as an actor didn't you ?

Yes, I was an actor for about twenty years, starting in theatre and graduating eventually to television where I suppose I had the curious distinction of being in the first TV soap opera which the B B C ever did - The Grove Family

You then moved to radio where you did some announcing between programmes. What actually is the announcer's job ?

I didn't actually go in with the intention of becoming an announcer. I was there on a holiday relief job while the other announcers were away and they wanted six or seven people to come in for about two or three months to fill in. It was different and rather pleasant to be getting a regular cheque every month rather than being an actor and starving half the time. I started to quite enjoy it and they asked me to stay on and do another session and then another and eventually they asked me if I would like to become a staff announcer.

You're now a literary agent. Isn't that something of a departure ?

I suppose so, but I've always rather enjoyed working with writers. I did it in radio for quite a long time as assistant head of the drama script unit and then as a script editor of **Doctor Who,** so I thought it was quite a sensible development of my career after I left the B B C.

In between, of course, you worked in television, notably 'Doctor Who' which was your first production as producer.

Yes, I had become an associate producer on the programme with **The Faceless Ones,** and then I was allowed to do **The Tomb of the Cybermen** on my own, although Innes Lloyd was around all the time. It was a daunting prospect because, in those days, you were very much thrown in at the deep end. You trailed the programme for a long time and were expected to learn all about it while you were doing that. I was fortunate, though, in that the script was such a good one, so there was no need for me to add any more to what Kit Pedler had provided; it was all there. The real problems were the financial ones - getting the things to meet the budget was quite a big problem.

After 'Tomb' you script-edited for a while, having already co-script-edited 'The Evil of the Daleks' with Gerry Davis. There seems, at the time, to have been quite a lot of interaction of rôles on the production side.

It was strange, actually. There were several people floating around. I think it was probably because they were on attachment and being tried out.

Your association with the series coincided with what many people consider to be one of the programme's finest periods. Your first story as producer constant was 'The Web of Fear' which introduced the U N I T concept. Had you intended that to become a regular part of the programme ?

Well, I had hoped that it might be, but it is very dangerous to predict and say "This will happen". If, though, things work the way you hope then you're only too happy to go on with it. It was so well acted by the U N I T people that we used them again in **The Invasion,** which Douggie Camfield also directed. He was the best director that I ever worked with. Indeed, I think he was the best director who ever worked on the programme. Anything to do with the military, Douggie - who came from a military background - was absolutely marvellous with. He got everyone looking right and looking as though they were soldiers. He was really first class.

At the end of the following season Patrick Troughton decided to leave the show and there was even talk of cancellation. How did you go about persuading the B B C that it was worth continuing with ?

I don't recall that there was any talk of cancellation. It was, then, very popular, and when we knew that Patrick was going I was given the job of finding a new man. I did that and then left to go on to do Paul Temple.

So why Jon Pertwee ? He was, after all, a comedian, and we had just had a rather comedic and humorous portrayal from Patrick Troughton.

Perhaps, but he was also an actor and a very talented and versatile one. Originally - and this is well recorded - I asked Ron Moody but he didn't want to do it, so I got Jon. It was his versatility that attracted me particularly. He could sing, he could dance, he could play the guitar, he could do silly voices and could be funny. Also he looked very good. He encompassed all the things which I thought would make an interesting new **Doctor Who.** In the end of course he played it straight, which was a pity because I had envisaged it another way. Nevertheless I thought that he was most impressive and very authoritative and had a presence - a personality. I thought, and still do think, that it is necessary to have a **Doctor Who** of that sort of weight.

So you wouldn't think very highly of the more recent Doctors ?

No, most certainly not. There have only been two **Doctor Whos** in my view - Patrick Troughton and Jon Pertwee.

Not William Hartnell ?

No. I didn't think that William Hartnell was actually a very good actor. Not particularly good or, at least, not in **Doctor Who.** He was at his best playing regimental Sergeant Majors in films. At that he was really first class, I'll give him that, but I never really cared for his **Doctor Who.**

Had you stayed for Pertwee's first season would you have prevailed upon him to play it as you had envisaged, or still allow him to do his own thing ?

I would have, yes, but the problem was not with Jon, it was with the then new Head of Series and Serials (who I think was Ronnie Marsh) who, after I had left, had other ideas and didn't see the characterisations the way I did and so whatever I had planned was kind of squashed. Had I stayed on I would have done battle with him for it to be played my way and I think I would have won.

Who, ultimately, has the final say on that sort of problem ?

That's a good question. You have to work together. The producer, really, is the man in charge of the programme and its policy, but you can't jump on people and say "You will do this!" You have to find ways of persuading, certainly your lead actors, that your idea is right. Usually, professional people like Patrick and Jon will come to an agreement or compromise if necessary.

The programme also received a new producer to succeed you. Was Barry Letts your idea too ?

He was my suggestion. I remember discussing this with Shaun Sutton, because Barry had directed **The Enemy of the World,** and when we talked I suggested that he would be very good.

Were there any particular controversies during your time ?

People say so but I don't remember that there were. There was the occasion when a mother wrote to say that her son loved the programme but was absolutely terrified, so I got him into the studio and got one of the Cybermen to take his head off. The little boy roared with laughter and was fine thereafter, but I wouldn't call that - one letter, which was all I ever had - a problem.

That aside, as a producer you must take public criticism very, very seriously indeed. Anything to do with children's programmes I would take extremely seriously, and if I thought the complaint was justified I would alter the programme, most certainly.

After 'Doctor Who' you went on to Paul Temple. As far as the producer's function is concerned, is there a great difference between one programme and the next ?

Not in the basic nuts and bolts work of it no, there isn't. It's still the same hiring and firing and budgets and organisation. Having said that, within the actual programme format there is, of course, a great deal of difference. Certainly between something like **Doctor Who,** which is very demanding of one, and Paul Temple which wasn't, really.

Were you to return to 'Doctor Who' would you do it the same way as before ?

It was a damn sight better than what's going on at the moment, and what we're talking about here is a style of programme. It has nothing really to do with anything else such as 'the nature of television today'. I don't think there was anything at all wrong or old-fashioned about the way we produced it. It was straightforward narrative storyline, lots of tension, lots of thrills and chills. Certainly I would revert to those methods.

I don't care much for today's scripts or stories. I've seen the first two of this current season (**Battlefield** and **Ghost Light**) and I do find that they're very very fussy and difficult. There are too many characters. It's not all that easy to follow. No cliffhangers, no real excitements and too many anticlimaxes. This is, after all, primarily a children's programme. Its attraction is that it appeals to adults as well, but its primary intention is for children. I think 7.30pm is a pretty good time, but when we had it at 5.30pm on a Saturday it was splendid. It usually followed sport when the dads would be watching and then straight in to **Doctor Who** when they would stay on watching with their children, which I thought was rather good planning.

Where do you think 'Doctor Who' started losing sight of its target audience ?

I think when the character of **Doctor Who** himself went off the rails with Peter Davison, in my view. This is nothing against him - the sort of things he does do, usually, I think are perfectly okay. But his performance as **Doctor Who** was too bland. It had no kind of sharpness to it. **Doctor Who** is the title character. He is the lead of the whole business and you have to have somebody playing it who can be a leading man. He must have that authority and I didn't feel that Peter had that.

The personality of the actor playing the part is the most important thing, and I don't think that the last three have been appropriate. In a funny sort of way I think that Tom Baker was. His personality was quite strong but it was a bit intrusive. His characterisation imposed itself upon you rather more than just being an actual part of the story that was going on around him - he was a bit 'all mouth and trousers'.

Who would you cast as the Doctor today, in the movie for example ?

Whatever facets of an actor's personality that you think are suitable are the ones to try. Because there is no background to draw on with regard to **Doctor Who** it's an absolute open book, so you've got to colour in this character and the actor has to bring something to it. Whatever you think he has that he can bring to it you either win or lose on.

If I were casting for the proposed **Doctor Who** feature film I should go for someone like Donald Pleasance. He would bring the right kind of authority to the part, and with a nice sardonic sense of humour, which would make an interesting new face for the character. He also happens to be a very good actor. The idea that Donald Sutherland should play it is dreadful. He's too soft-centred and lugubrious - and not wildly good at the acting, either.

I shall look forward to the film, if it gets made. **Doctor Who** should be made on film anyway and certainly lends itself to the big screen - if it's a good script. But there has to be a market for it. You can't make it on film just for domestic consumption. I think the market exists, if the film isn't too late.

This interview is taking place at a concention (Nebula 26). How many have you attended ?

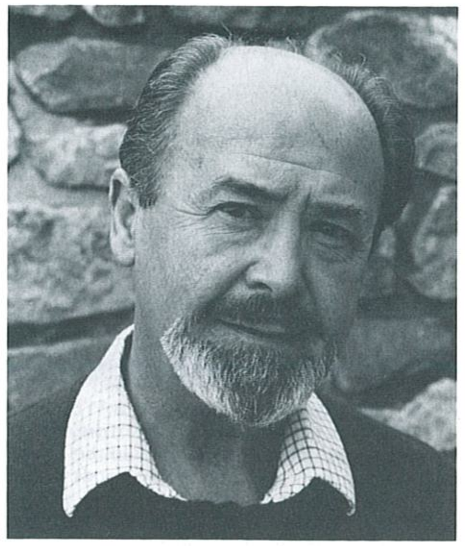
I've attended three and enjoyed them all. I was absolutely staggered at my first one (a PanoptiCon). I just really didn't expect that there would be that number of people who were that interested in the programme. I was very very surprised and it is extraordinary that the B B C publicity department haven't taken advantage of these conventions and been part of them, because I do think that it's terribly important and it is an amazing show of interest. I know of no other programme that has achieved this. And these people remember my time as producer over twenty years ago. I've been signing autographs for people who weren't even born when I was doing it! That was a bit of a shaker!

PETER BRYANT, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

(Interview transcribed and conducted at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, on October 15th 1989 by Peter Linford).

PHOTOS: Jon Pertwee's press-call in 1969 in anticipation of his debut story completing a proposed Yeti trilogy
(Copyright Sport & General Press Agency)

MERVYN HAISMAN



"I STARTED my professional life as an actor, and then in order to feed a family I went into the life insurance world for ten years.

"Towards the end of this period, I went back to acting in No Hiding Place. But things had changed so much in those intervening ten years that I thought 'This is not for me'. You see, I was rather used to getting on with it and not standing around in rehearsals for ten days or more. Actually, the last time I'd acted on TV was in a piece with Sonny Hale at Alexandra Palace! Things had certainly changed in those ten years!

"One of my clients in life insurance was John Whiting, the playwright, and I talked to him about writing and he said 'Well, you're an actor, you know good dialogue and you know how to construct, so have a go'. I did, and I was lucky enough in 1964, after a couple of false starts, to write a Doctor Finlay. They seemed to like it, and I was commissioned to do another which is when I threw in my life insurance job. I've been writing full time since January 1965.

"One of the actors I met in No Hiding Place was a man called Henry Soskin, which was his stage name, but he also wrote under the name of Henry Lincoln. We found we lived fairly close to one another and used to meet up from time to time.

"We got together as a writing team over **Doctor Who.** Henry knew Patrick Troughton as a fellow actor. Pat had casually remarked that he was looking for something different. So we thought 'Why not come up with an idea that is recognisable, yet turns out to be different, say, for example, the Loch Ness Monster?' That's when we hit upon the idea of the Yeti. We did a very brief outline on it and sent it in. The producer and script editor then met us and asked us to do a treatment and develop it. They liked what they saw and commissioned us.

"**The Abominable Snowmen** was set in Tibet and that proved so successful, that before it actually went out they asked us to do another Yeti story! The first story was shot on location in the Welsh mountains and Henry, my wife and I all went up to North Wales thinking we'd be staying in the hotel with the rest of the cast, but everything was completely booked up. This was way out in the wilds, so the three of us slept in my old shooting-brake and we were **freezing**!

Henry and I, having both stemmed from a mutual theatre background, actually drew the sets and did drawings of the Yeti ourselves. We didn't quite envisage them with such baggy legs. We were after something that looked fairly cuddly but had this surprising ferociousness about it. We also did a lot of the design work for the monastery and so on, because we felt, certainly in those days, actually suggesting ways of doing it showed that you'd done a lot of homework on the subject.

"When we came to do the second Yeti story, we thought it would be great fun to carry on the character of Travers and come back to him when he was an old man. I don't remember whether it was Henry's or my idea to set it in the London Underground - I think we jointly came to the conclusion that the simplest way for any creature or alien to get around London would be via the Underground system which was ideal. Again we designed sections of tunnels for curves and straights and the platform, and when London Transport forbade us to use the actual Underground we filmed that in the studio. When it went out they phoned us horrified that we'd gone down without their permission because it looked so real and they were completely taken in by it!

"Recently, after all these years, I saw episode one of **The Web of Fear**, and I was very pleased to see how good it was, particularly under Douglas Camfield's direction. I could see why Douggie wanted the Yeti redesigned, but personally I don't particularly like them. They looked more fiercesome than the original concept of the Yeti, which was that it should look cuddly and harmless and yet had this fiercesome power. In this story I think they looked far too menacing from the word go, which I thought was a bit of a pity.

"I'm bloody mad, of course, that the rest of the episodes were destroyed. The BBC went through a period of trying to save tape - and we're talking about pennies here. They wiped an awful lot of good television. It was a tremendous pity. Unfortunately the video machine was not around then, so I very much doubt whether there is any complete copy of **The Web of Fear** in existence. If there is I'd love to

"Henry and I also invented the character of Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart - who at that time was a Colonel. There was no brief, we simply created the character entirely for our own for the story. I'm glad he's survived to this day.

"Looking back I can see why this period is still fondly remembered to this day, but when we were doing it we were just working writers and got on with it and thought 'Right, where's the next crust coming from?'!

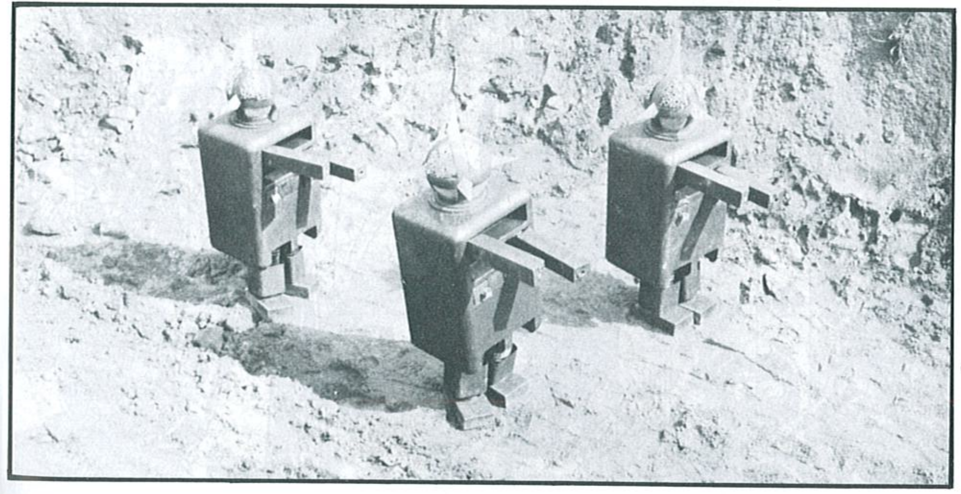
"I suppose Henry and I also had an eye on the marketing potential of the Yeti. When Terry Nation created the Daleks he was right up front. The BBC were completely unaware of the merchandising value. He was a very astute business man. Shortly after the Daleks the BBC handed everything to BBC Enterprises. Thereafter all associated merchandising had to go through the BBC.

"That rather brings me on to a later story featuring the Quarks, where the BBC actually **asked** us to create a new monster. This we did, of course, for **The Dominators**, complete with drawings of the body and the replaceable hands and fitments and so on. However, that's not such a happy period which is why that story went out under the psuedonym of Norman Ashby.

"What happened was, we designed the Quarks with the intention of having all sorts of add-on things instead of hands and so on, which you could then buy as a basic kit. The finished version didn't really come up to our expectations. They were a bit laughable, I felt, and didn't have any sort of menace at all. We originally wanted them to have a tremendously innocent child-like voice, yet still have the power to just wipe out someone. But that, like many other things in that season, fell by the wayside.

"**The Dominators** was actually commissioned as a six-part story and it was cut to five. This was cut without any consultation which made us very annoyed. It was virtually taken over from us, and that was when we parted company with **Doctor Who** unfortunately. Also certain people within the BBC claimed that the Quarks were their entire copyright, and the first we knew about this was when we heard that a comic was going to bring out an entire script of the Quarks without our permission. We had no option but to threaten them with an injunction. We met up with the head of BBC copyright and I'm afraid he had the producer and script editor hauled over the coals.

"Before all this happened we were actually working on a **third** Yeti story which would have introduced Jon Pertwee's Doctor as well as being Jamie's finale. We were going to take them back to Scotland and the Intelligence, in preparation for taking on a material form, was going to rope-off, within a force-field, an area of Scotland in which there was a castle. The Laird of the castle would have been from Jamie's clan, and when the old leader (possessed by the Intelligence) finally dies, Jamie has to decide between going on with the Doctor or becoming head of his clan, and being a responsible lad, would have opted for the latter.



PHOTOS: (Opposite page) Deborah Watling (Victoria) and Jack Watling (Travers) on location in Wales for 'The Abominable Snowmen' (This page) Jack Watling as Travers in 'The Web of Fear' and the Quarks from 'The Dominators (c)M.Haisman/BBC

"We never got to a treatment, just storyline stage, and then after **The Dominators** affair we put it from our minds. I haven't followed **Doctor Who** a tremendous amount since. I watched some of the Pertwees which I liked very much, and some of the Tom Bakers which I also liked. It then began to get a bit too way out so I haven't watched it for some time.

"I had said to John Nathan-Turner years ago that if they ever wanted to bring the Yeti back - although probably Henry and I wouldn't write them - we would, I'm sure, both be happy to give our permission for them to be used. As it was they (or rather it) only reappeared for the reunion story (**The Five Doctors**) for which we were only too happy to give our permission. However the Yeti in that wasn't portrayed very faithfully to the original, but we would have to assume that, like the Mk.II version, they had progressed!

"In hindsight I think both Henry and I would like to have done a few more **Doctor Whos**, but events didn't work out that way. Since **Doctor Who** some of my writing credits have included the Onedin Line, Sutherland's Law, Squadron and Jane, which was based on the Daily Mirror strip cartoon. I also wrote the film of Jane which had a royal première.

"Currently I'm on my third season of Howard's Way. This series, of course, starred the late Maurice Colbourne. I'd worked with Maurice on The Onedin Line many years ago, but I didn't realise he had also played a major villain in **Doctor Who.** He was an absolutely charming man and his loss hit the production team very badly.

"Currently Ray Thompson, who also writes for Howard's Way, and I are involved with the StarWatch project. I think StarWatch has very great potential providing there's going to be enough drama slots left on TV once this current Government Bill goes through. I think, as far as the BBC is concerned, it doesn't appear to be threatened at the moment. However, f the TV companies are given franchises based purely on the highest bid, then I can see many programmes going to the wall. Children's programmes and a great deal of drama would almost certainly disappear. Drama costs a lot of money to make and we could end up with an endless round of panel games and cheap foreign imports. That's a pretty sickening thought. At the moment we possess the finest TV system in the world. Let us make sure we keep it that way. And the only sure way to do this is to lobby your M.P. and make your thoughts known.

"As to my future... Well, obviously I do have one or two things in the pipeline, but I've been writing long enough to realise that the more you talk about future projects, the more they are likely to disappear - a bit like the TARDIS, really, one moment it's there, the next, it's gone!"

(Conducted from his Dyfed home by Gary Leigh on November 16th)

DOCTOR WHO IN THE EIGHTIES

'DOCTOR WHO APPRECIATION SOCIETY' CO-ORDINATOR CRAIG HINTON CASTS A CRITICAL EYE OVER 'DOCTOR WHO' IN THE EIGHTIES AND ASSESSES ITS STANDING TODAY COMPARED TO TEN YEARS AGO...

AS I BEGIN THIS RETROSPECTIVE, I'm sitting in a hotel room in Copenhagen. It's November 23rd 1989, 'Doctor Who' is 26 years old in approximately two hours time, and I feel reflective.

Since the Danes seem ignorant of the series (I've just asked the room service waitress: "Is it a pop group?", she replied), 5:25pm will see a solitary celebration, far from the alcohol and vitriol of the Fitzroy Tavern, which itself is far from the apathetic celebrations that surrounded a very different **Doctor Who** a decade ago...

Rather than a chronological romp through the past ten years of the series, I'd like to concentrate on various aspects of **Doctor Who.** I hope that, by the end, we'll all have a good idea of what the Eighties have really changed.

I: 'ALL FUR COAT AND NO KNICKERS'

Even to an uncritical fifteen year old, it was clear that something was seriously awry with Season 17. The Baker/Adams/Williams triumvirate , struggling to comply with the 'less violence' edict imposed by the Archangel Whitehouse, had finally fallen off their knife-edge. Madam Purity had won, and **Doctor Who** had degenerated into self-parody: cheap, shoddy, played for laughs. A tired sixteen year old television programme, it had taken a calculated risk - and lost.

Ten years on, and Season 26 demonstrates exactly what you can do with **Doctor Who.** Using special effects wisely, relying on taut direction and inspired casting, the current season (26) works. And before the cries of 'toadying' are sent flying at me, I'd like to say that I feel that it has taken all of the ten years to get it right.

When John Nathan-Turner took over, his initial changes were predominantly cosmetic, packaging. But where does the wrapping finish and the content begin ? Keeping only the lead actors, he threw away all the standards: the theme, the howlaround titles, Dudley Simpson. The replacements set the baseline for 80's **Doctor Who,** and this was Nathan-Turner's only radical change - within the series. Everything else that he did - within the series - followed the same course as his predecessors. It just did it for longer...

The different script editors brought the different feels to the series. Nathan-Turner stayed constant while the Bidmeads, Sawards and Cartmels fiddled with the vitals. With the former, **Doctor Who** became an intellectual jigsaw; Saward tried modern gothic but degenerated into modern gore; Cartmel experimented with all three and added a dose of Marvel and DC comics. Nathan-Turner provided the production values and the directorial style, but the meat came from elsewhere. And obviously there were mistakes.

Bidmead's desire to inject 'real science' into the series meant that something had to give, and that something was action. Being a fan of hard science fiction, I loved all that TARDIS stuff: real world interfaces, block transfer computation, time cone inversion... Unfortunately it all sounds like pseudo-intellectual clap-trap - the curse of **Doctor Who.** Well-paced meanderings through the philosophical concepts of Escher and Einstein have one result. They lose the 'floating viewer' if the action is lacking.

After the short and annonymous tenure of Anthony Root, Eric Saward got his claws into **Doctor Who.** So what did he do with it ? He began by re-introducing action: **The Visitation, Earthshock, Arc of Infinity.** However, this didn't seem to satisfy him. Beginning with the notorious Cyber-massacre in **The Five Doctors,** Saward led the series towards his version of Hinchcliffe gothic. His version was unadulterated violence and gore, which eventually became unacceptable to the general public - and to the 'powers that be'. Acid baths, attacks with hypodermics and broken fingers are not the same as the hinted at horror of Hinchcliffe and Holmes. The series was rested and told to mend its ways.

Eighteen months later, **Doctor Who** returned, as stale and confusing as Season 17. A cobbled-together unbrella theme highlighted the emptiness of good production values which lack substance. Pip and Jane Baker demonstrated that, however much money is spent, a bad script **looks** bad on screen. I found Season 23 to be **Doctor Who** at its worst: smug, complacent and vacuous. Something gave.

Andrew Cartmel, a great fan of the dark gothic of current DC and Marvel Comics, brought something of their style to the series. Season 24 failed, only because he was **too** experimental. With only 14 episodes to work with, you just cannot afford to waste half the season with rubbish like **Delta and the Bannermen** and **Paradise Towers.** For the first time, I found that I wasn't bothered. Thankfully, Cartmel had a trick up his sleeve.

When I wrote my Season 25 retrospective for **DWB#65,** I was criticised on a number of fronts: toadying, making it up, reading things that weren't there... Perhaps this will answer many of the letters subsequently published. I liked Season 25. I found it entertaining and thought-provoking. Being DWAS Co-ordinator doesn't mean being JNT's lap-dog: Andrew Beech's notorious newspaper article proves that. As for making things up or imagining underlying concepts...I WAS **TOLD** CARTMEL'S 'MASTER-PLAN' BY **CARTMEL,** JNT, MARC PLATT AND OTHERS. I have read scripts which point out advances in the series' mythos. I made none of it up. And I enjoyed it. 'Nuff said ? Indeed, I find the current season even better, and **The Curse of Fenric** exceptional. Then again, my all-time favourite story is **The Invasion of Time:** didn't I ever say that the main prerequisite for becoming DWAS Co-ordinator is insanity ?

Cartmel tried to reintroduce mystery to the series by making the Doctor a contemporary of Omega and Rassilon. Actually he didn't: there was no definitive answer to the question, only the viewer's own expectations. He kept us guessing, right up to the very end of **Survival.**

Nathan-Turner provided the canvas: his artists painted in many styles, from cubist to old master. Some stories hang in the Tate, some in old ladies' front rooms. All are **Doctor Who,** for better or for worse.

II: 'I AM THE DOCTOR - WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT'

Nathan-Turner cast more Doctors than any other producer. Not very difficult, since nobody had cast more than one, but JNT cast **five** (including the 'new' First Doctor and the Valeyard - I'm being clever). His three 'official' Doctors varied considerably, as all Doctors should. But were they any good ?

Tom Baker (or someone) once said that the rôle was actor-proof. His namesake, Colin, shattered that myth, but with good reason. Peter Davison and Colin Baker were never allowed to control the part. Both were cast in concrete, given uniforms rather than costumes, and expected to play some theoretical theatrical interpretation. The impetuous youth and the arrogant thug. The other Doctors gave their rôles their own characters, and grew with time. Not so Davison and Baker.

The initial brief for Davison was quite intriguing: an old man trapped in a young man's body, infuriated by the lack of respect. In many ways he came across as a young William Hartnell: aloof, imperious and impatient. Unfortunately he never really reached critical mass: his Doctor constantly burnt just below ignition point. Only in his final story did we see what he was capable of. Too little, too late: after four episodes of classic **Doctor Who** it was goodbye to the silly costume - and hello to an even more ridiculous one.

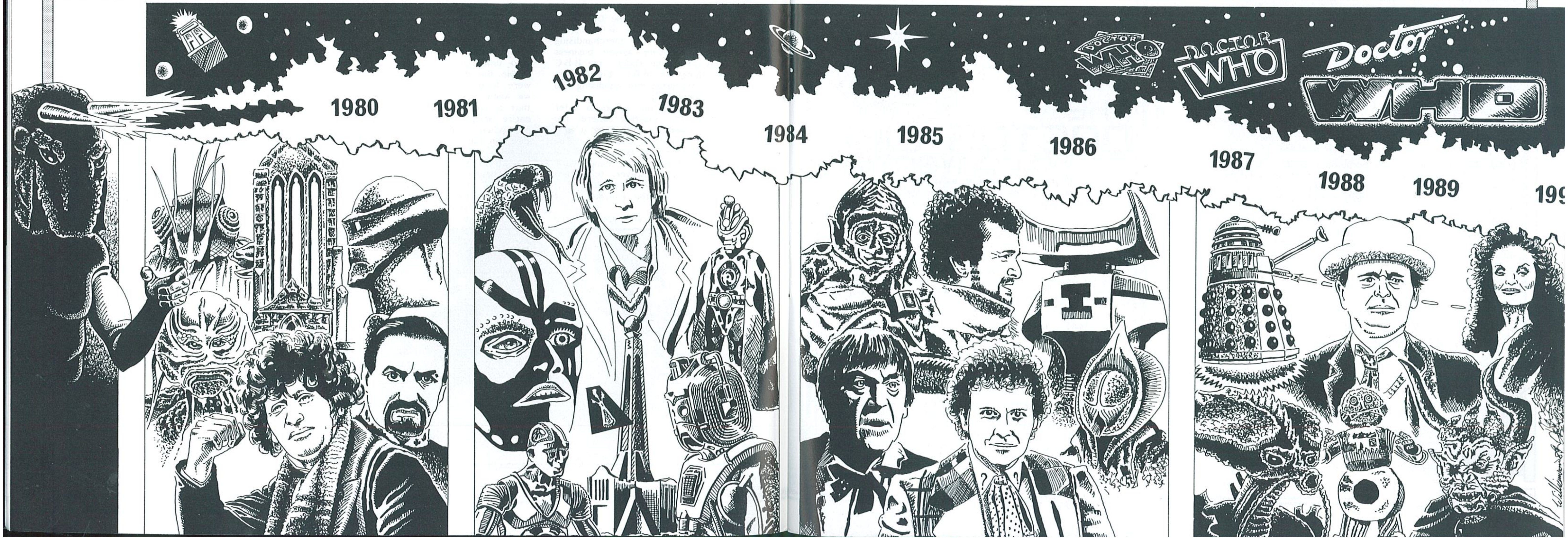
Colin Baker was instructed to bring his 'bad boy' image to the rôle. Sadly, he forgot to temper his interpretation with positive behaviour. The Sixth Doctor was arrogant, rude and unconvincing. If only he could have brought himself across, rather than the clichéd orator, lacking any social virtues, Baker may have worked. Sacking him was backstreet surgery, removing the sympton, not the cause. Where the blame lay may never be known. Certainly his **Ultimate Adventure** persona was far more acceptable.

When Sylvester McCoy was cast, fandom spasmed. Judged before he had even been seen, no Doctor could have had a worst reception. And as he worked his way through the dreadful cesspit of Season 24, it seemed as if our worst fears had been realised. A spoon-playing Time Lord, saddled with the dreadful Bonnie Langford, he didn't stand a chance. 1987 was not a vintage year for **Doctor Who.**

As Cartmel introduced the 'more than a Time Lord' mythos, McCoy altered his character. Silliness had to recede to make way for the dark brooding of Season 25. Cartmel's image of the Doctor ('playing chess on a thousand boards') could not support a vaudeville performance. McCoy became a mystical, troubled traveller, a crusader. Helped by one of the best companions ever, given some good (sometimes excellent) material, McCoy developed a character combining impishness with absolute power. Perhaps his one drawback is his inability to shout convincingly: he always sounds incoherent. Still, a fair exchange. The best of the bunch.

III: 'A HOUSEHOLD NAME'

By 1979, **Doctor Who** was 'That children's programme on Saturdays'. Each new season was rubberstamped with no doubt as to its



future. As I sit here (it's 5:25pm - Happy Anniversary, everyone!), **Doctor Who**'s future is undecided: B B C or independent, OB or film...what happened inbetween ?

As Nathan-Turner took the series into the Eighties, the B B C realised that they were sitting on a potential goldmine. **Doctor Who** made more money than it took to make; the Americans loved it; it was a household name. The time had come to exploit their golden egg, and obviously Nathan-Turner wasn't going to sit back and let it happen without some sort of control.

With the approach of 1983 and the twentieth anniversary, the B B C smiled upon the series. Extra episodes graced Season 18; Season 19 was preluded by **K9 and Company**; and, of course, Season 20 made way for **The Five Doctors.** 1983 also saw the notorious Longleat convention: a badly-organised fan's dream, yet a hectic taster towards the over-hyped **The Five Doctor.** I believe that that particular story marked the end of 'the golden age of **Doctor Who**'. Things would never be the same again...

Maybe we did get extensive press coverage and a Radio Times cover. Perhaps we could openly admit to being fans without suffering instant ridicule. But **The Five Doctors was** premièred in America on November 23rd 1983. We had to wait two more days, only to see it buried under Children In Need and butchered with subtitles. An even more worrying pointer towards the future of the series involved the DWAS's proposed anniversary convention. Booked for November 23rd 1983, it soom became apparent that every name connected with the programme at that time would be in Chicago on that date. Naturally there was money involved. **Lots** of money...

As B B C Enterprises grew wealthier, the series saw very little of it. As licenced merchandising and overseas sales increased, it was becoming increasingly apparent that, on the home front, **Doctor Who**'s star was not in the ascendant. As it moved from day to day like a sad old bag lady, viewers lost interest and ratings fell. Eventually someone noticed.

Enter Michael Grade, dashing B B C executive, who soon made his feelings clear. He saw **Doctor Who** as a tired, overly violent programme, and 'rested' it. Actually, he hated the series, but didn't expect the sudden backlash from the public and the shaking heads of his superiors. Many felt that Grade had overstepped the mark. **Doctor Who**'s star went nova.

Every newspaper carried the story. Petitions were raised (I remember my student union proposing a motion to fight the cancellation). The official answer came back from Grade: it would return. But **Doctor Who** was on trial.

When it did finally grace our screens, the rubbish served up only fuelled further criticism. Colin Baker was publically sacked on Grade's orders, and the papers gave very low key coverage of McCoy's arrival. And that has set the tone for the late 80's.

Doctor Who is now buried in the graveyard slot, losing the ratings war against Coronation Street (hardly surprising). It exists, some people watch it, but generally it is taken for granted. Indeed, we are back to where we were in 1979: part of the furniture. Again this is hardly surprising considering that the B B C and the Radio Times seem incapable of promoting it beyond a few trailers and a tiny article each year.

IV: 'BOOKS AND THINGS'

Until 1980, **Doctor Who** memorabilia consisted of the Target book series. That was all. The decade that followed has seen an unimaginable explosion of material in all media. The Target series continues, much expanded, and B B C Video have discovered another little moneyspinner in releasing older stories to an eager public. **Doctor Who** Monthly continues, as fresh as ever, and Starburst, TV Zone and Fantasy Zone all include **Doctor Who** coverage in almost every issue. Fans are now deluged with information from every side. It is now quite an expensive hobby.

This phenomenon is not unique to **Doctor Who,** however. All television programmes, B B C and independent, are rarely unaccompanied these days by 'the book of the series'. Old favourites are constantly appearing on video - the 80's have been the decade of add-on merchandising.

V: 'SOME CORNERS OF THE UNIVERSE...'

In 1979, all information on the series came from two sources: the DWAS newsletter, Celestial Toyroon, and the new **Doctor Who** Weekly. Numerous cheaply-printed fanzines were available. Fandom was amateur; fandom was fun.

In 1989, the DWAS has lost its monopoly on fandom. Many bodies have and do organize conventions, and do so exceedingly well. The boundaries between newsletter and fanzine have dissolved, creating magazines such as D W B. A5 photocopies have evolved into glossy A4 publications, written using desktop publishing systems undreamt of in 1979. The DWAS must now prove that it still has a rôle to play in fandom: no body of organized fans has a divine right to exist.

Fandom has lost that amateur feel that characterised the early days. Current publications, such as The Frame, In-Vision and Private Who, are better produced (and better written) than early editions of Starburst and **Doctor Who** Weekly, yet I mourn some of these changes: the fan ideals have shifted from mutual enjoyment to the pursuit of money. Personal, vicious attacks are now commonplace within the letter columns of current fanzines. When I wrote my Season 25 retrospective, I wrote it as Craig Hinton, fan - not Craig Hinton, DWAS Co-ordinator. Using what I knew, I explained why I enjoyed it. The result was a serious of personal and unfounded insults. I'm not worried or upset about that. I simply find it sad that we cannot be fans anymore without leaving ourselves open to verbal and written assault from our peers.

VI: 'CHANGE, MY DEAR'

Ten years. JNT has redefined the standards and fandom has grown up, but what has really changed ? For the first time in years, we are officially told that the series' future is secure. Once again, the public take it for granted: it's there if they want it. Without their attention, it has once more become the fan's little secret - 'our programme'. Maybe the Eighties will be known as the JNT Years, marking an era when the producer made himself more important than the star.

But for all the tinkering and tampering, the experimentation and cosmetic surgery, **Doctor Who** is still here. And still the same: a man, a TARDIS, and a whole Universe to explore...

CRAIG HINTON

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right of reply

GIVING UP THE GHOST

IT IS NOT like Julian (Knott) and I to disagree so passionately on the subject of a 'Doctor Who' story, but with 'Ghost Light', it has to be said that voices have most definitely been raised. It is interesting, even refreshing, for a story to promote a good argument for once, so after Julian's effusive superlatives, I feel duty bound to put the other case.

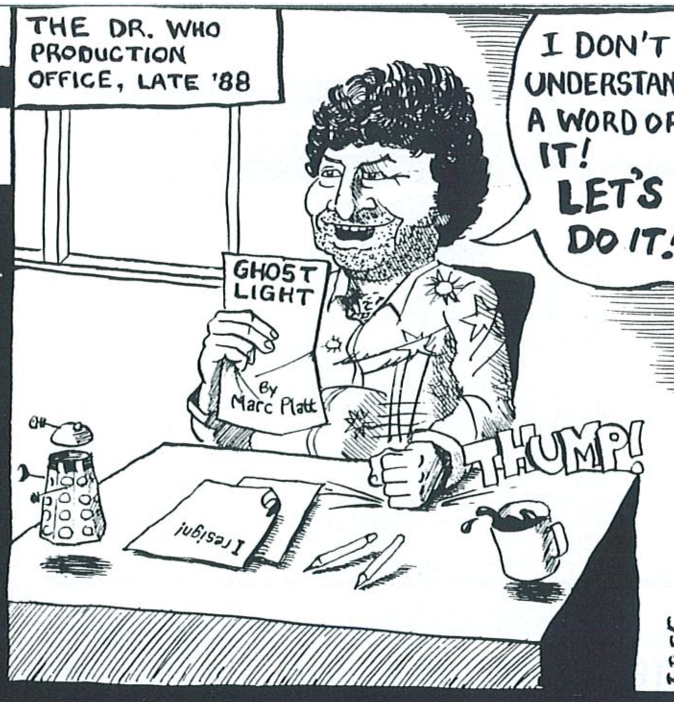
Why do I feel, then, that **Ghost Light** missed its target ? It undoubtedly contains some of the best lines and most interesting ideas ever presented in a **Doctor Who** story. What it lacks is that characteristically simple, suspense-filled storytelling that makes classics of the stories Julian cites in his introduction. A logical, coherent storyline does not preclude a challenging story, or make a predictable plot. I am under the impression that the original **Ghost Light** script has been altered, whether for reasons of time or simply to "improve"(?) the pace, and I can only assume the fault lies with the script-editor. The 'steak' was...butchered!

Consider the opening scenes. We are chopped and changed from one subject to another as if watching a particularly annoying bout of channel-hopping. There is no time to take in the geography of the house, and no chance to establish the characters as anything more than names and faces. Then, in the midst of all this, the TARDIS arrives. Even though the Doctor has his reasons for doing so, it is unlike him to land inside someone's house. It smacks of ill-manners (you wouldn't park your motorbike in someone's living room, would you ?). It is established in part two that the TARDIS has landed in an attic, but the first episode leaves us with nothing but confusion as to the Doctor's actions. He obviously has some sort of plan, but it manifests itself as a kind of macabre game played on his companion, and is thereby kept from the audience. The script leads us to believe that the Doctor knows about Josiah, Light, and the whole set-up at Gabriel Chase, but how, and why, should he know ? We cannot sympathise with a character who knows everything and won't confide in us.

From the Doctor and Ace we are thrown back into the plot and all manner of (largely unexplained) red-herring nonsense, presumably included to create some air of mystery but succeeding only in making matters even more incomprehensible. We have rocking-horses with glowing eyes (a nice idea, but why?) and servants who flee with undue haste at the knocking-off time of six o'clock. Why were daytime servants necessary anyway - there was **no-one** alive to serve! Credibility goes to the wall for the sake of a theatrical effect. I would argue that bizarre behaviour only registers as bizarre when contrasted with normality. In the first episode of **Ghost Light** there is nothing but strangeness. It is all very well defying dramatic convention if by defying it you can prove it to be unnecessary. Simply serving up a bit of "business" to give a superficial element of suspense, and with no corresponding explanation, wastes the precious time that would have been better spent embellishing the characters.

In due course, and in the midst of more strangeness, we are introduced to the villain of the piece, Josiah Smith. The Doctor seems to know him, and Josiah is not thrown by the Doctor's presence. Was Josiah expecting the Doctor ? It is odd that Nimrod invites the Doctor to dinner, "on his master's request", when the master shouldn't have been aware that the Doctor was even in the house at all. These things aside, Josiah is a brilliant character, and it is nothing short of tragic that his appearance is limited to three episodes. He could easily have been the central character, another Marcus Scarman or Li H'Sen Chang, and if his ultimate ambitions had been on a rather more universal scale than the old punk-rocker's standard, "Kill the Queen", he would have been a villain in the Master-class.

Light is later caught, by Nimrod, in the process of dismembering a housemaid, admitting rather sheepishly that he "wanted to see how it worked". The parallel with little boys, pulling the wings off flies, is clear enough.


THE DR. WHO PRODUCTION OFFICE, LATE '88
I DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD OF IT! LET'S DO IT!
GHOST LIGHT
By Marc Platt
I resign!
THUMP!
WiFF

As I have said, Josiah could have carried the story himself, so it is a crying shame that a beautiful and clever concept like "Ace's Angel" is over and done with in a single episode. Light should have had a story of his own, for his arrival served only to show, via a couple of casual murders, that Josiah's was a rather empty threat all along. There are very few clues to Light's eventual presence as a character in the first two episodes, which makes his arrival all the more unexpected, and it sends the story off into a whole new direction. It's a shame, because I quite liked the old direction.

Given Josiah's obvious fear of Light, it is strange that when Light finally turns up, in all his corporeal glory, he is as supremely indifferent to Josiah as he is to everybody else. There is a throw away line that "Josiah is the survey" somewhere at the beginning of part three, and if we're expected to work out our explanations from every last line, what are we supposed to gather from that ? Anyhow, it is not Light who ultimately foils Josiah's plans, it is Control, and it is Control who eventually puts Josiah in chains. Josiah's "enemy", the one he was prepared to pay the Doctor so much money to eliminate, was it Light or Control ?

Josiah would have been better off being terrified by Control, which begs the question of why she was kept supplied with food and newspapers (better to let her rot, surely ?). I have a theory that Mrs.Pritchard was secretly looking after and educating Control as a means of freeing herself and Gwendolen from Josiah. There is other evidence of Mrs.Pritchard's defiance (she pushes a candle into Josiah's face in episode one) but I get the impression that this element of the storyline was pruned by the script-editor into virtual non-existence.

Other questions are legion. What was the light that came from Redvers' cigarette-case ? Was it Light, himself, trying to escape? Was it Josiah's means of subjugation and hypnosis ? What did Redvers find in the jungle ? Another spaceship ? Our spaceship, which was then in Perivale ? Was he ever in "The Interior" at all ? What were the dinosaurs, more of Light's specimens ? Above all is the question of the Doctor's fore-knowledge. Once again we are given no impression of the Doctor looking for explanations, so the audience are given none. It is exactly the same situation as with **Silver Nemesis,** in which everyone was expected to think "Well, if the Doctor knows what's going on, then it must be all right..."

Ultimately, it is very hard to dislike a story with so many excellent one-liners and arresting visuals. There is the Doctor's line about Josiah knowing as little about his origins as "a hamburger knows about the Amazon desert", and Nimrod's confusion at "this world of straight lines...". Josiah's transformation is wonderful, as are all the visual effects.

A story, however, especially a three-parter, does not need to be crammed to the brim with elements in the way that **Ghost Light** is. What is important is the relationship between the Doctor, and the audience. We should be drawn along by the flow of the storyline, not hurled from one unexplained conflict to another. We should discover things before the Doctor does, and then await his reaction. We should have things discovered for us by the Doctor, and then explained. You can dazzle your audience with special effects, and charm them with witty lines and clever acting. However, if the story is not there as the frame into which all these parts fit, your audience is lost.

DAVID MILLER

METAMORPH

ISSUE THREE DECEMBER 1989

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John S. R. Bates (editor)

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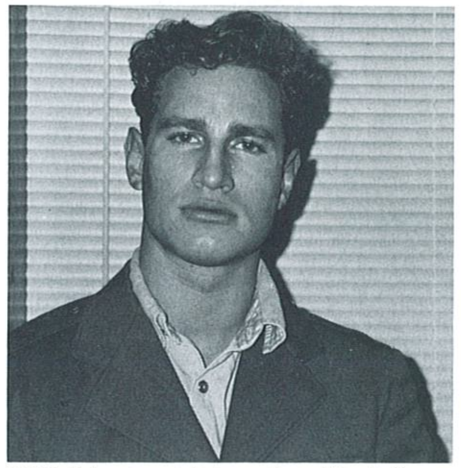
MAREK ANTON



HOW did you get into acting, Marek ?
I was born in Britain but was brought up in a Polish family environment which was very community-orientated. A lot of the things involved with the community were religious plays and singing. I used to be a psalmist at church, so initially I got the confidence and experience of standing up in front of a lot of people whether it be at mass or the congregation.

Later at comprehensive school our musical director was involved with producing records and working for the London Philharmonic and I used to sing with the choir there, so again I got more experience working professionally in recording studios. Because of that I suppose my personality was geared towards performing in that sort of field.

What were your major rôles as a performer prior to 'Doctor Who'?
I did a stint in the West End in Starlight Express, which was really exciting because I had gone from drama school to dance college and so was able to use my dance training. Prior to that I had done a B B C Playhouse and a series for children's TV which was rather like Grange Hill called Who Sir, Me Sir? I then did things like The Paradise Club and I started doing more commercials.

The Paradise Club is produced by Zenith who have been mooted as potential future independent producers of 'Doctor Who'.
I think they work really well. I only did a few days' work with them but I felt they were very professional in their approach. The filming was very good, and the director I worked with was great.

Presumably your Polish background was instrumental in you landing the rôle of the Russian soldier Vershinin in the recent 'Doctor Who' adventure 'The Curse of Fenric'?
I speak fluent Polish and do so whenever I can (if I can remember it!). I had just come back from holiday and there had been a call from Nicholas Mallett who wanted to see me and I went straight to London. He was so helpful, encouraging and inspiring that I was swept off my feet really. When I found out it was for Doctor Who, I thought 'Wow, this is going to be really interesting'.

I did the reading and I actually had to improvise a scene in Polish, although he didn't understand a word I said, so I did the same thing in English to see how the ethnic background came into character.

Was it the rôle of Vershinin you were originally auditioned for ?
No, I read for Sorin because he had more lines. I don't know whether they were considering me for Sorin, but I couldn't think possibly that they would have done because Sorin was a Captain and needed to look a lot more mature than I look, so when I read it they asked me to play it a bit younger than my age, so I played a younger, more inexperienced private who then became Sorin's right-hand man. So I think they had an idea I could fit into the part of Vershinin who was this enthusiastic juvenile soldier who wanted to follow in Sorin's footsteps.

Had you watched 'Doctor Who' previously?
Yes, I watched during the Jon Pertwee days. I always loved the opening music, which unfortunately has changed since. I was listening to it recently and I felt there's something missing. I think it was that 'humming', almost aboriginal instrument that they used to use and that always used to scare me. I watched Jon Pertwee up to Tom Baker and then I stopped because it just became too studio and clinical and the storylines featured less monsters and instead concentrated more on weird people. I always thought it should be a monster/supernatural/futuristic-type thing and I just lost the sense of what they were trying to do.

What were your first impressions on reading the script ?
A complicated story initially, even while I was working on it I wasn't sure exactly what was supposed to be happening because there were certain locations where I wasn't involved in. And because they don't film in sequence you don't actually know what's happening and it's very difficult to develop your character. I understand it now, but I think they have a habit of writing very complex plots, and if you're trying to gear that to a children's audience as well as a more mature student audience they're losing a lot of child appeal. All that technical scientific talk is very alienating for an audience trying to understand what's happening.

The filming actually over-ran on each episode. Have you noticed any of your scenes cut from the final version ?
I don't know because I've only seen the first couple of episodes so far. I do have one criticism in that what I have noticed is they focus or single-out individuals on their specific lines and they cut the other characters or put them in the background. Therefore you only get clips, if you like, of a character so you only get to taste what they're like and then it's taken away from you. That doesn't help development, and again, scriptwise, I had an awful lot of single lines and if you do watch carefully you've got one character saying something and then it will focus on me saying my line and then another character, and because it is video you've got individual shots for each individual person speaking their lines. I think that is tacky and it doesn't really work because you don't create this relationship between the other people in the group, instead it all sounds very scripted. Filming out of sequence doesn't help because you keep having to think 'Where the hell am I at this point, have I been attacked yet, etc. So you have to really be aware of where you are in the filming.

Were you pleased the story was shot entirely on location ?
It was fantastic and the location was beautiful. We were sunbathing in Lulworth Cove in March which I remember well because I was wearing this Russian uniform and it was ever so hot, and I remember just stripping off in one of my breaks and just laying there on the pebbles. When we were in Crowborough it was actually snowing, so a complete contrast!

Have you acted in uniform before ?
I have a few times. One of the first jobs I ever did was a documentary series on Airey Neave after he was blown up by the I R A, and I played the Polish prison boy in a cell who actually told Airey Neave (who was played by Clive Francis) that he was going to be assassinated the next day. A play I'm doing at the moment I have a part of a Lieutenant Gestapo officer, so again I'm in a uniform. I think a uniform is always something which is very smart and stylish if you can wear it well and look the part.

Were you happy, then, to settle for the part of Vershinin as opposed to a more prominent rôle like Sorin which included a love interest with Sophie Aldred ?
I knew I couldn't play Sorin because there's no way you can look at me and say that guy's going to be in charge of a platoon or be in command, but I would like to have seen Vershinin develop with more lines because, although he's around in the first two episodes he doesn't really feature until the third episode and then more in the fourth because he's the last remaining Russian soldier.

Nicholas Mallett's previous credits recently won him the distinction as worst-ever 'Doctor Who' director. What did you think

of his work on Fenric ?

I hope he's got back his reputation. Working with him in rehearsals you got to know him really well and he was on a level and communicated really well. When it came to filming there were problems and an awful lot happening technically with lights, sound and so on which he had to occupy himself with, so we didn't really talk much on location, but in rehearsals I think he was very helpful and encouraging.

Did you have much to do with John Nathan-Turner on location ?

No, you didn't really hear much from him - he just stood around and watched and obviously approved of what was done.

Apparently Nathan-Turner oversaw a lot of the underwater direction ?

Possibly, because while we were shooting the beach scenes they went off in a boat in a separate crew to shoot the underwater scenes to save time.

What did you think of the Haemovores as a monstrous creation ?

I laughed at first, but I thought they were quite effective because of the costumes - the feel that they all came from different periods in history. The sequence where they all came out of the water I thought was very effective because although I saw it being shot, watching it you don't expect it to happen. It was rather like the Sea Devils in Jon Pertwee's era rising out of the sea. They were scarey and I think in the old days they used to use really good music and you got this evil feel because the music was used in conjunction with and enhanced the characters or monsters. I don't know whether the music is helping the Haemovores in this particular story. Certainly in **Battlefield,** where I played The Destroyer, it was very loud and distracting instead of being atmospheric and subtle. I saw a film recently called The Last Temptation Of Christ and it was so brilliant because Peter Gabriel's music for it was so subtle. It was there all the time like a gentle hum, and the wailing of the Hebrew women when somebody dies was just right. It gripped you all the way through and helped set the mood and feel, the whole culture of the country and of what was happening at the time. I didn't really think the music helped in **Battlefield** to be honest. It was very loud and excited.

The person who wrote that also did the latest opening title music, but then John Nathan-Turner does seem to go in for that kind of glitzy style.

But it's not necessarily everybody's taste. Maybe John likes it, maybe a lot of people don't, so really it's a question of how to please everybody at the same time. Not easy.

How did you get the part of The Destroyer as 'Battlefield' was recorded after Fenric ?

It was actually on the last producer's call in rehearsals that I got called to 'JNT's office'. I thought he was actually going to tell me off for misbehaving or something because the spirit of the Russian soldiers tended to come out amongst those members of the cast in rehearsals (ie: bombastic, loud and confident). So I was weary he was calling me in to tell me to keep the noise down and concentrate on what we were doing. But when he actually said 'I was watching your performance and I would like you to consider playing a part in the next story' I was over the moon! He left me in the office for an hour to just look at the script and said 'Just do something with it' and I did. I just worked on it and tried different voices seeing what I could do with it. It was a very physical character, obviously, and you had to rip and display muscle and show that he was powerful. I think JNT had this image of The Hulk, and although I'm not **that** pumped up I could make myself look bigger with the right sort of breathing and physical movements.

Was your voice modified for the part ?

No, I was very pleased about that because all they actually did, as far as I'm aware, was maybe put an echo at some points of his speech where they wanted to show his strength and power. Because I had the mask on obviously the voice was chanelled slightly differently. There was maybe a muffled sound to it and I had special teeth put in as well which put a lot of the emphasis on 'Ss' and that was quite effective. But I thought it was most important that as an actor I do most of the work because I think it is essential that I try and play the part rather than having voice-boxes on me and have them do everything. I was there to do a job afterall.

How long was it before you were actually fitted into the costume ?

A while. There were real problems with the costume. To say that JNT wasn't very pleased would be an understatement! They were doing their best to produce something as quickly as possible. I mean, three days before shooting they only had a prototype! I don't know much about the problems but there were problems. They sprayed it a vibrant kind of green initially and then mauve, but they couldn't use that colour because of that scene where The Destroyer's head gets blown off because they had to use a backcloth and it was the same colour. So eventually they made it blue.

I think the mask was very effective, but when I put it on those horns were really heavy, and every time I moved I had to stoop down because I'm six foot tall and those horns were at least another twelve to fifteen inches extension. They sculptured the mask around a cast which they took off my head so it fitted nicely, but once they put on the scalp piece and all the wires for the movements and the technical bits it was very uncomfortable because it did press very hard against the back of my head which caused considerable pain.

Which bits of the mask were remote-controlled ?

The eye movements were my own eyes. I had the rubber right against my eyelids and the skin around my eyes. The mouth I had to kind of extend my chin to make a larger movement which didn't come out as large in character, but every time I spoke I had to really use my jaw so that you could see the mouth moving. The sniffs and the kind of grimaces and the frowns were created with a wire mechanism which was controlled by one of the creators of the monster.

I worked it out with the costume designer (Stephen Mansfield) where I would say, for example, 'At this point I want to growl so I'll maybe screw my face up and at this point I'm going to look kind of puzzled so maybe I'll frown'. He basically co-ordinated this with what I wanted to do because I had to use my hands in a lot of the movements which would then prevent me from using this wire contraption. So we worked it out together and I think it came off well. The only criticism is that, for a character as strong as The Destroyer to be eliminated so quickly was a little bit of a farce really, because you'd have thought he could do more, even just to show his strength. If they could have incorporated him earlier on into the story then there might have been some fear built up around him. There was one bit with an explosion where the Brigadier says "What's that?", and the Doctor says, "That is the beginning of the end of the world..." I mean, really, looking at it, you can hardly think this guy's dangerous. He was powerful but he wasn't able to show his power, and I think that was a shame.

It must have felt strange being 'shot' by one of the characters you'd watched as a child ?

It was really funny because I couldn't relate to The Brigadier as the guy I used to watch. Obviously I've grown up and he's changed as well and grown older. It was just really weird. Instead of thinking that's the person you used to watch, you just accept that's another actor who's performing opposite you.

How do you think Sylvester and Sophie work as a team ?

Sophie's a lovely girl and most inspiring, and such a beautiful person who I got on well with and we stay in touch even now. Sylvester was more difficult to get to know, but I soon realised he was only human after all - a true Scott who loved his whiskey and Drambuie (his "Real McCoy", as he called it!). He was a comical character and he and Sophie have a relationship which seems to come off.

I think Sophie is the kind of person who can work well with anybody. She carries off her own persona and charisma very well, regardless of what her lines are like. I think why **The Curse of Fenric** worked better for her was because she showed maturity in it. She showed human weaknesses which the female audience could relate to, rather than some sort of superhuman person. There was something very nice about the scene where she pretended to seduce a guard. The Doctor asks "And how are you going to do that?", and she says "I am a woman, I'm not a girl anymore". And it was about time they made her into a woman, because Sophie is a mature girl and she can offer a lot more than what she's been allowed to give.

Did you catch her excellent performance in 'Ghost Light'?

To be honest I only watched one episode but I couldn't get into it. I really didn't know what was happening so I can't really comment on that one.

Which of your two different rôles did you ultimately prefer playing ?

I enjoyed The Destroyer because it was the first time I could be something bigger than myself and show strength in an awesome character. Working with a mask was a very new experience for me which I did enjoy though it was excrutiatingly painful at times. The only thing is you weren't able to see how you were reacting because it wasn't my face doing the work, it was the muscles behind my face.

With Vershinin I would have enjoyed him more had he been more developed as an individual. I prefer playing human parts so I can see whether the emotions are coming across okay, whereas with The Destroyer I had to just get inside the mask and let myself go which I also enjoyed. A lot of people hide behind a mask in every day life because they don't like themselves as they are, and I think that taught me to be able to show what I feel without having a mask on (that true me?) and that's what I've learned from it.

Could you tell us what you have lined up in the near future ?

I've just been offered to play a couple of rôles in Martin Sherman's Bent with Ian McKellen at the National Theatre, and it will be nice working with somebody of that calibre. I'm also up for a rôle in a film, again playing a Russian communist youth leader which is something I'm keeping my fingers crossed and praying like crazy to get because that will show, definitely, a lot more of me as a person, and I think I can identify with the character. It's based on a true story and certainly that would be a brilliant experience. I've recently performed as Tarzan, and that was very much due to Sophie because Daniel Peacock, who knows Sophie well, was writing a script for Granada which is like an Indiana Jones comedy adventure series called Jackson Pace with the Comic Strip team. They were looking for a Tarzan and she mentioned I had played The Destroyer and they saw me and I got the part which is quite funny.

What are your long-term ambitions ?

One of my long-term ambitions is to play the part of Stanley Kowalski in Street Car Named Desire, primarily because Marlon Brando is somebody I've read about and studied and as an actor admire immensely. He played it at the age of twenty-three on Broadway, and having a Polish background there is an awful lot in Kowalski's character that I can relate to - if I can put that across on stage and put on as good a performance as Brando did then I'm suddenly getting somewhere.

MAREK ANTON, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Conducted at Marek's Reading home by Gary Leigh on November 15th.

GOODGE STRE
dwb

ANN CHARMAN
DAUGHTER OF THE LATE
GEORGE CHARMAN
OF THE COLONADE

THE CURSE OF FENRIC

DOCTOR WHO is getting rather complicated. To follow 'The Curse of Fenric', you needed to pay close attention to four episodes, keep track of half a dozen storylines, and know something about the previous series.

Was it a discourse on the morality of warfare - questioning the rights of the Allies to bomb Germany into submission fifty years after the evnt ? Was it a lurid spy drama about double-crossing the Cold War enemy ? Was it a vampire story of the first order ? An eco-thriller cashing in on the green renaissance ? An investigation of Ace's background ? A traditional **Doctor Who** monster thrash ? The culmination of the Seventh Doctor's mysterious and omnipotent opposition to an unknown evil force ?

Well, actually it was all of these. Blink and you'd miss one. And while I can't remember a story since **The Caves of Androzani** that I've enjoyed so much, I can't help wondering what the general public (Sid and Doris Bonkers) thought.

Those who struggled over from Coronation Street (the episode that isn't repeated at the weekend, that is) would have been rewarded by impressive visuals: misty coastline invasion, a weapons dump straight out of a Bond movie, and lashings of rain. They would also have suffered a number of rather gratuitous moments: staring, dead faces underwater that would have Mrs.Whitehouse reaching for her B B C video of **The Deadly Assassin;** figures of authority ('the girls' in uniform) suddenly becoming figures of fear, the reduction of two pretty girls to ashes, and the slaughter of most of the cast and extras in scenes which made **Battlefield** look like a food fight.

Horror fans would be rewarded by the use of the vampire legend, invested (as so often in **Doctor Who**) with a pseudo-scientific explanation. The Haemovores are repulsed by faith in the form of a self-protecting psychic barrier: horror's holy relics require Christian faith, but here the atheistic creed of the Revolution is devotion enough.

But they might have been puzzled by some narrative implausibilities: how could Hitler-lookalike Millington have duplicated the German cypher room so exactly (down to the files)? How does Millington know about the flask ? And there are puzzlingly unanswered questions: how is Millington to blame for Judson's injury ? What is the implied connection between Millington's orders to lock his shipmates in a burning hold and the death of Ace's grandfather ? Why is the Ancient Haemovore the only articulate monster ? Why does Ace carry a steel climbing ladder around with her ? And how did Wainwright get hold of a post-war translation of the Bible (which translates 'charity' as 'love') ?

Still, there is much to enjoy in the direction: Nicholas Mallett makes entertaining use of multi-camera OB, and there is much to applaud in the eery underwater work and the other touches - the unseen Haemovores are enough to make a trained Russian soldier drop his weapon and flee, and the subtitles are in a 'futuristic' typeface. If the show really did have to be pruned down from five episodes' worth of material to four after overshooting, then it has only benefited: the cutting is taut, the pace never sags, and the use of voice-over is excellent.

The dialogue crackles along too: "The Haemovores devour people the way you eat fruit" sticks in the mind, as does the Wainwright/ Doctor exchange: "I don't think there are any records of battles taking place yet"/"Today's events haven't been recorded yet". And the show has two of the most memorable cliffhangers in years: the traditional monster-rises-from-the-waters shot (but with added Doctor BCU, as is traditional when Nicholas Mallett directs) and the suddenly-mobile Judson appearing over the Doctor's shoulder to utter chillingly: "We play the contest again, Time Lord."

The latter, of course, works on our knowledge that the Doctor is a Time Lord and that, on the whole, other characters don't know this. It's something that, thanks to the popular press, the British viewing public know, too. But there is an increasing amount of dependence in modern **Who** on recent series mythology, and the public can't be expected to have taken that in yet. The B B C publicity machine could, in the 1970s, reiterate the Time Lord idea with every story. What can you expect to make the notion of the Doctor as a mysteriously-powerful know-all ? It doesn't look all that good on a press handout.

For the fans, of course, the Seventh Doctor is establishing his credentials admirably. He can forge autographs, say mysterious things about not knowing about his own family, he is no "mere mortal", and he can wander into a Top Secret establishment without credentials, and he "always knows" what's happening.

His relationship with Ace has matured too, as the final episode demonstrates. She may no longer be a "little girl", but she still clings to her belief that the Professor is omnipotent. She also hasn't got over her schoolgirl crushes on soldiers, and you'd have thought she'd know better after **Remembrance of the Daleks**! Her social naïveté is pointed up by her gauche assumption that a decent young girl brought up in the thirties could have a child out of wedlock, her adolescent hatred of her mother, and her bizarre collection of chat-up lines. When the Doctor denounces her in the closing minutes, he is closer to the truth than he later admits: her continual refusal to obey her mentor's strictures about explosives, and her inability to conform for her own safety (she carries around her jacket, despite the need to dress clandestinely in wartime clothing) mark her out as a self-interested child, paradoxically dependent on the Doctor as father-figure.

Which isn't to say I don't like her: I think she is a fascinating character, and her interaction with the Doctor is first-rate. Sophie Aldred's performance makes her a distinctive and exciting companion, and the end-of-story revelations about her manipulation by Fenric make her relationship with the Doctor more interesting still.

But so much now depends on our familiarity with recent **Who** history. And if fewer than five million people watched this season (and many fewer watched every episode), how can the series justify its continued existence, let alone its narrative reliance on viewer loyalty ?

I like this new **Who:** the mysterious Doctor, waging a lonely battle against a force for evil which has many physical manifestations, fighting with symbolic tokens (swords, chess pieces, hand signals, jewels, statues), something more than the Time Lord we used to know. But whereas the original introduction of the Doctor's Time Lord past was based on existing public knowledge (an alien several hundred years old with a mysterious background), the new **Who** is in danger of rewriting the old.

If the Sixth Doctor was too much the anti-hero, perhaps the Seventh is not enough of one. He is becoming the Universal Establishment. If the Doctor is a contemporary of Omega; if he can create supernatural devices; if he has knowledge of the time before time began; in short, if he is the White Guardian, how can he ever fail? Like Ace, we are being offered a character in whom we can only have unswerving belief. Without confidence in the character, we are no longer fans. But let it not be a blind faith.

PETER ANGHELIDES

YOUR VIEW

ANDY BOOTH: **The Curse of Fenric** was wonderful. The story was darker than I had hoped for and suited the seventh Doctor perfectly. It is difficult to imagine any of his predecessors facing the Haemovores, Fenric and deranged commanders with such authority and - dare I say - style. When the Doctor arrives, he knows where he is, what he has to do and who is involved to a large degree. Mark Ayres seems to be the only person currently providing the incidental music for the series who does not feel it necessary for that music to be annoyingly obtrusive - he knows when he is needed, and when he isn't. Ian Briggs acknowledged an increasing irritation at the Doctor having so much fore-knowledge and experience of the enemy by having Ace vent the same frustrations on the Doctor that so many fans have wanted to do on Andrew Cartmel! It was a bonus that the story linked to **Dragonfire** and **Silver Nemesis**; in doing so it enhanced my enjoyment of them in retrospect (farewell to at least some of the holes in their respective plots!). Ace's character in this season has seen development unparalleled for a companion in **Doctor Who**'s history, and Nicholas Mallett demonstrated his genuine flair for location work, while proving his OB work on **The Mysterious Planet** wasn't a fluke.

IAN MACEY: I don't think I've ever looked forward to each episode of **Doctor Who** as much as when **The Curse of Fenric** was on air. Ian Briggs has produced an excellent script full of mystery and suspense - his only fault having the ancient Haemovore destroy itself and Fenric, obviously to save the Doctor doing it. Sophie Aldred deserves full marks for her performance, but the biggest surprise had to be Nick Mallett who at last conveyed a story brilliantly from script to screen. I would hate to have seen **Fenric** reduced to garbage ala **Paradise Towers.**

JONATHAN HAYWARD: To me this story was a masterpiece and McCoy's first real classic. It was the first story in a long time which reminded me of the days behind the sofa, and I was completely hooked from the very first scene. I can hardly believe this was directed by the same man who perpetrated **Paradise Towers.** Mallett has more than redeemed himself in my mind, and Ian Briggs has to be congratulated on a wonderful, thought-provoking and **intelligent** script. As has been typical this season the acting was first class, and Nicholas Parson's poignant performance must surely have silenced his critics.

TIM MUNRO: I'm still in shock after **Fenric.** Atmosphere, violence and (whisper it, lest the Hintons and Howes of this world are about) S-E-X! And Nicholas Parsons turning out to be a superb actor, and "major revelations" that not only were everything **Silver Nemesis** should've been but wasn't, but also **enhanced** continuity instead of driving a lorry through it and even repaired at least some of Cartmel's previous "innovations". So nice of Ian Briggs to explain away the more crashing inconsistencies of **Silver Nemesis** while he was at it - I hope Kevin Clarke is grateful. It's just a pity that a writer should have to go around clearing up the messes left by a previous one. And on top of that, it's well-directed! In fact Mallett's work ended up better than Michael Kerrigan's! I need a lie down...

GLENN DAVIDSON: **The Curse of Fenric** has to be McCoy's best story by far. The opening shots were unbelievably atmospheric, with the subtitles and 'fog' giving a very dramatic, film-like quality. The final minutes were truly gripping with the revelations about Ace's mother and her struggle to cope with her emotions resulting in an extremely happy, and at the same time sad, sort of ending.

ANDY WALKER: I found **Fenric** extremely atmospheric with some particularly sharp and intense performances from Sylvester and Sophie. The supporting cast also gave credible performances, even the much-dreaded Nicholas Parsons. The direction was quite inspired in places, such as the tracking shot of Wainwright in the pulpit and the juxtaposition of the underwater sequences and the Doctor and Judson reading the transcriptions. Also worthy of note were the 'shaky' camera shots in the woods and those accompanying Ace scaling the church tower. The closing scene, with Ace taking a dive, was an unusual but thoughtful idea, and the Haemovores were a convincing race of monsters; a shame they didn't do much more than stalk about twitching their fingernails! But why the fixation with monsters with blue faces this season ?

GAVIN CARVILLE: **The Curse of Fenric** has got to be one of the best stories this decade. It was exciting, funny, sad and really frightening in some places. Acting all round was excellent, except for Nicholas Parsons who was very disappointing. Sylvester has become the most complex, multi-layered Doctor yet, but **Fenric** was really Ace's story. Sophie Aldred was amazing in every scene.

CHRISTOPHER WOOD: **Fenric** has to be the best adventure for many a year. Stunning performances from everyone, an excellent haunting script with some classic lines ("When it comes to death, quantity is so much more satisfying than quality") and the readings of the Viking translations which were - as was the whole story - complimented by Mark Ayres' superb music. Nick Mallett shook off his worst director tag with ease, high points including the close ups of the shocked Miss.Hardaker and the grinning Fenric-controlled Dr.Judson, and plenty of revelations abounded: just who **is** the Doctor? Ace's character was given plenty of depth, unlike the flimsy kid we saw in **Battlefield.** The only criticism was, if Fenric can transport himself, why did he let himself be choked to death? In all, though, a fine **Doctor Who** - all we need now is to get rid of the ill-fitting title sequence and bring back the Tom Baker titles!

JOHN BOURN: The darkest and most atmospheric **Who** tale for years, thanks to Ian Briggs' excellent script which, unlike Ben Aaronovitch's back-of-the-envelope effort, had clearly been thought out with considerable care **and** provided explanations for what was happening! And was this really the same Nick Mallett who directed **The Mysterious Planet**? It was fluid, stylish and provided some beautifully macabre images, especially during the incredible episode three which brought back happy memories of past zombie movies! Mark Ayres' music was atmospheric as always, although it did take on a touch of the Keff McCullochs in episode four, and the acting was generally of a high standard. Add the ecological sub-text and more character development for the Doctor and Ace and you have a gem of a story.

STEPHEN MAGINN: I had somewhat mixed feelings about **The Curse of Fenric.** Nearly all the performances were excellent, Nicholas Parsons doing exceptionally well, but it was Ace who seems to be the star of the season rather than the Doctor. Here she received the best material courtesy of her 'creator' Ian Briggs. The "extensive surgery" that had to be performed seemed to leave surprisingly few scars, and I only got confused once - not bad for me in this day and age! Still, I have a few reservations: the Hamovores are not the most terrifying monsters ever to appear in **Doctor Who,** it must be said, and as they were led along the beach by the girls, Michael Jackson's Thriller video sprang to mind! Although Nick Mallett's direction was competent, somehow I felt there was something missing in the atmosphere department (maybe it ended up on the cutting room floor - shame!) and Mark Ayres' **Ghost Light** music was far superior to this. Even so, if **Fenric** had opened the season, I think the ratings and press reviews would have been much healthier.

ROGER SPENCE: **The Curse of Fenric** adhered completely to the recent style of **Doctor Who.** A terribly gripping, fast-moving first episode throwing in mysterious objects, suspicious characters, unseen menace and promising a good chance of developing into a really good story. Then the Doctor and his rather confused sidekick run around for the next three episodes shouting at each other or anybody who strays into their path! "Just as I thought!" exclaims McCoy every three or four minutes. "What's going on Professor?" shouts Ace. "Evil!" spits McCoy, as if this answers everything. The rest of the cast wander around, unaware whether they **are** the evil, or whether perhaps they are only there to wander about now and again. And in the end, good has somehow triumphed over evil again. The story ends in a blaze of confusion - why was Fenric killed by the Ancient One? Why didn't/couldn't he resist? What was the point of the chess sets anyway? And so on. The answers may be there somewhere, and doubtless some will have managed to find the actual plot within the chaos - but I haven't met anyone yet who has succeeded. If the fans cannot follow the 'plot', then how on earth will the rest of the viewing public cope? I expect the viewing figures will answer that...

* STAR * RATINGS	*
SCRIPT	****½
ORIGINALITY	****
DIRECTION	****½
ACTING	*****
SETS	****½
COSTUMES	*****
MONSTERS	****
SPECIAL EFFECTS	*****
MUSIC	****
OVERALL STORY	*****

TOTAL = 91%

BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS...

IT IS SAID that primary schoolchildren are nowadays asking their teachers the question "Are men allowed to be Prime Minister?" since they have no memory of any other lead than Margaret Thatcher. In the same way it would be understandable if 'Doctor Who' fans under the ripe old age of sixteen have been asking themselves whether John Nathan-Turner were the only person allowed to be producer of 'Doctor Who'.

At long last, on the tenth anniversary of his appointment to the position he took on December 7th 1979, the end of his term has arrived, and so this seems as good a time as any to review the man's approach to the series over the years, and what better source to refer to than many of the interviews he wallowed in giving during his tenure. Whilst this cannot pretend to be an exhaustive study of his reign, it is hoped that it will provide a fair reflection of how 'JNT's' aims and aspirations have developed and changed over the past nine seasons, and how, sometimes, plans went slightly askew...

It all started on Brighton Beach, with the location filming for episode one of **The Leisure Hive.** 'Doctor Who Weekly' provided the first real glimpse of the new producer in a short article based around the filming (issue 31 - 'The Man behind **Doctor Who**'), but this was chiefly notable for its combination of sub-Blue Peter type prose ("What exactly is a television producer? Have you ever wondered?") and its gushing enthusiasm for the new broom ("John Nathan-Turner, the brand new producer with ideas and the power to get them into the series is the fighting force behind **Doctor Who**".) Unfortunately little of interest is heard from the "Fighting Force" apart from some comments on the problems encountered with the Brighton weather (ironically, brilliant sunshine spoilt the off-season look that the script required). Even the accompanying photos are taken from the Graham Rickard book 'A Day in the Life of a Television Producer'.

Much more rewarding is the question and answer session recorded in Starburst#27, then approaching its zenith as a Marvel publication. In conversation with John Fleming, JNT outlined his attitude to production of the series after nine months in charge. After the over-the-top pantomimesque antics that had characterised Season Seventeen, Nathan-Turner apparently had clear ideas on the changes in style necessary under his leadership: "We're trying to approach it much more seriously as an adventure/science fiction in which there is humour rather than something which is dominantly humorous...I think humour has its place in the programme and it's a very essential ingredient. It's a case of putting the spotlight on the humour at the relevant moment in the story...I would like the comedy to fall more into the background".

In response to a question on the 'new blood' being brought in on the scripting front, JNT explained how keen he was to bring in fresh talent: "The programme's fantastically popular and I think there have always been lots of writer's who've wanted desperately to write for the show...if you don't entertain new writers you'd be stuck with the same people who wrote it in 1963. We are concentrating on new writers who come with fresh ideas and a fresh outlook towards the programme".

He was also enthusiastic about the young actor just recruited to play the Doctor's latest assistant: "He's eighteen years old. He hasn't done a lot of acting before...I think he's quite a find - he's going to be great". Younger readers will probably be wondering who this budding Olivier is. Alas the subsequent career of Matthew Waterhouse failed to show the early promise of his appearances as Adric...

JNT was also eager to dispel certain scurrilous newspaper reports that had suggested a well-known robotic companion of the Doctor was about to undergo the mechanical equivalent of a trip to the vet for a lethal injection in the neck. Was K-9 really going to be scrapped ? "No, this is something that's been blown up by the press. I have been accurately quoted as saying there are some stories in which he will not appear this season, but there are no plans for him to leave this (18th) season at all...I think (K-9) is something that some writers have relied on to get the Doctor out of a situation they otherwise can't get out of...even in that Sun article I was quoted as saying there are no plans to get rid of him". **Warriors' Gate** was broadcast six months later.

Fleming wound up the interview by asking how he felt after nine months in the job: "It's been tremendous so far. I can't believe the time is slipping away so quickly...our short schedule's so gruelling that the months do tend to go by very quickly...I'd very much like to stay with **Doctor Who** for at least another year".

During completion of filming on **Logopolis,** Nathan-Turner was interrogated by Jeremy Bentham for the pages of **Doctor Who** Monthly#51. What neither party could possibly appreciate was that this would be the first and last time JNT would have the luxury of commenting on the previous year's output to the background of a united and overwhelmingly enthusiastic reaction from fandom. Nathan-Turner began by going into greater detail about the pressures of the position: "In any one day one could be called upon to be present at an editing session for a completed story, have to read a script for a future serial, talk to a director about filming due to start in a month or two's time and then oversee the current production being recorded...we'll be virtually running straight on from the end of this season...stories for the next season have already been commissioned".

Mention in passing was made of the poor ratings caused by ITV's **Buck Rogers** opposition, but: "Far from slipping down, the ratings had quickly climbed back to the average as the season got under way" (it is interesting to note now that **DWB** has given its readers access to **Doctor Who**'s viewing figures since the beginning, fans can now make their own subjective comparisons...). In response to questioning on the use of the spiders in **Full Circle,** Nathan-Turner explained: "With **Doctor Who** the intention is to scare but not to horrify. To keep everyone on the edge of their seats but without giving them lasting nightmares..." And on continuity: "I think continuity is very important. You might as well get it right than needlessly get it wrong. The only exception I would make would be if a new story turned up which was that good but contradicted something Patrick Troughton said thirteen years earlier. In that case the story would win".

One of the most pleasant surprises of the season had been the last few minutes of **The Keeper of Traken** and the emergence of a revitalised Master to dog the Doctor's footsteps. Nathan-Turner explained how this had come about: "The Master had not been in Johnny Byrne's original script. We in the production office had been responsible for his addition plus the links into Chris Bidmead's **Logopolis**...I believe every continuing and popular hero should have his 'Moriarty', the arch foe who knows the hero every bit as well as the hero knows him. We were lucky in finding the Master's **Deadly Assassin** costume...it was eventually unearthed in the props warehouse in Brentford. With **Traken** we wanted to give the impression that the Master had decayed even further than from his last appearance...we removed the bulging eyes part of the mask to make the actor's eyes stand out...". He also confirmed that the new Master would: "In essence" be a duplicate of Roger Delgado's classic creation: "But with slightly less humour than Roger had portrayed"(!?!)"My own taste in humour is for wit rather than belly laughs and this will be reflected in the Master".

Inevitably the question of casting Tom Baker's successor came up. Bentham asked how difficult had it been to pick his replacement: "Quite easy. Peter Davison was my first choice. I worked with him on All Creatures Great And Small and he is a very talented and capable actor. He has everything I am looking for in the new Doctor". Finally Nathan-Turner gave a brief outline of his plans for the future: "I would love to see a werewolf story in the programme, and for the next season I am considering bringing back one of the old monsters; not the Daleks as I think it is about time they had a good rest".

And so the months rolled by as we left the era of Tom Baker and moved steadily towards the brave new age spearheaded by Peter Davison which would see the series scale heights hitherto undreamt of by fandom. Well, that was the idea. Still, when DWM got around to the next post-season chat with JNT there was an awful lot to talk about.

Fandom's biggest gripe over the preceding year had been the violation of the show's Saturday early evening timeslot, something that had previously been regarded by B B C planners as being carved in stone in the schedules. Since this move had been the subject of adverse comment in the press (i.e. Guardian editorials), it's not surprising that the production office had attracted large volumes of critical mail. JNT was asked if he now considered the change a mistake: "I don't think I'm as happy as I might be with the show going out on Mondays and Tueadays. It puts the episodes too close together so you only really get one cliffhanger per four-part story. I don't think I'd have any objections to it going out on, say, Mondays and Thursdays...tastes have changed these last few years. B B C1 no longer has the absolute hold it once had on the Saturday evening ratings. In those days you started with Grandstand and went right through to Parkinson at the end of the day. People do a lot more channel-switching on Saturdays, and I earnestly believe that if we had stayed on Saturdays we wouldn't have pulled in the ten million average viewing figures we've been getting this last season". Although no mention is made here of the motivation behind the Five Faces repeat season, Nathan-Turner did explain in a later interview (DWM Winter Special, 1983/84) how that had developed:

"The idea for the Five Faces season was totally my own to counter this unwritten law that you didn't repeat 'out-of-Doctor'...if Pertwee was the Doctor you didn't run shows of Troughton even if you held the rights...it seemed to me at the time that after Tom Baker regenerated into Peter Davison we were going to wait the longest ever period of time to see what the next Doctor would be like...I thought it was essential to keep the show on the boil with the public. In addition there was a whole barrage of viewers who only knew Tom Baker as the Doctor ...so it was going to be the hardest job yet moving over into a new Doctor. (I wanted) to re-educate the public and...the younger viewers that there had been other actors in the part...at the back of my mind I was already thinking about a Five Doctors special for the twentieth anniversary. Now whether I was going to do it myself or not was immaterial. It had to be set up to be acceptable to the public by reminding them of the other Doctors...giving impetus to the special". But, getting back to the 1982 interview in DWM#68, why exactly had **Castrovalva** been recorded fourth instead of first?:

"I wasn't happy with the idea of Peter doing his debut story first. I felt he needed time to settle into his character before he did a story in which his character of the Doctor only came through in the final episode. I wanted to keep everyone guessing so that not only would they watch the first episode but the second, third and fourth as well. If you look at our figures you'll see we got it right".

The overwhelming success of **Earthshock** led Jeremy Bentham to ask why it had taken so long for such a monster story to be done: "...It was an absolute nightmare to make and it took a massive amount of work to get the episodes finished in time for transmission. What few people realise is that **Earthshock** had well over 300 individual scenes in it which is far more than the average **Doctor Who**...it was also a very costly story to do. We did it to prove to ourselves we could do it but don't think that every story from now on is going to be like **Earthshock**". He also explained the controversial re-styling of the Cybermen: "There had to be an exchange between the Doctor and the Cybermen, and between the Cybermen themselves. Complete non-emotion is very boring and so it was my decision they should have the moving jaw to give that necessary exchange. That way the Cybermen could still project such things as clinical fury and resentment which I felt to be important".

Once again Bentham wrapped up the interview by asking what the future held for the show: "We'll be doing a standard season of six four-parters and one two-parter (well, it **was** standard in 1983) which will go out in the New Year...I am pressing for some sort of special programme to mark (the 20th anniversary). If that goes ahead then I think that will be my last production for **Doctor Who.** I'll have done three seasons by then which I believe is a good time at which to call it a day".

Indeed. A few months later, after the end of the curtailed Season 20, DWM#76 billed an interview with John Nathan-Turner on its front cover. Turn to the inside and what you really get, however, is a biographical profile which contains not a word on the twentieth season but an awful lot on the various plays and pantomimes JNT worked on down the years, as well as All Creatures Great And Small. For no readily apparent reason, the following paragraph was slipped in among all the fascinating detail:

"I think four years is more than enough. I was persuaded to do this extra year and I always wanted to do the special. Part of that persuasion was because none of my new ideas had been accepted by the controllers. I would rather stay with a show that I like, love and enjoy, despite the very hard work, than go on to something that somebody else has instigated (sic). I would rather that what I went on to after **Doctor Who** was of my own making...I have devised one show with a particular emphasis on a bi-weekly model, a soap opera that I would like to do...(as my ultimate goal) I would like to aim for Controller One of B B C Television!".

Infinitely more interesting is the conversation conducted in the pages of Cygnus Alpha#11 (January 1984), the Devon-based fanzine. The interview was conducted on June 7th 1983 by Paul West and Graeme Bassett in the aftermath of the B B C strike that had very nearly wrecked the anniversary celebrations: "There was a chance at one point - because we made **Enlightenment** after **The King's Demons** - that we were going to lose that as well which would have made the season a non-event, because we just wouldn't have been able to transmit beyond **Terminus**...we were all tremendously relieved when we finally got the revised studio dates...the final episode was, I think, finished the Saturday before the Tuesday transmission".

"...The way **The Five Doctors** is shaping up, it looks marvellous. It was a joy to watch so many people come out of the woodwork...I know that the general public will enjoy it as much as the fans...I think Terrance Dicks found it difficult because we were giving him the most frightening brief...we were saying 'We want the following people in it', 'We want a threat here', 'It's got to have this and that...', it was a mammoth task, one which I think he came up trumps on". Questioning moved on to particular stories, starting with **Arc of Infinity.** Why were overseas locations used?:

"I decided I wanted to do a story with some filming in Amsterdam...it wasn't hugely expensive...we always thought it could have been more essential to the plot. I mean it could have been anywhere with water like Venice or even Blackpool! We always did feel that more could have been made of it but beither Eric nor Johnny (Byrne) nor I could...although let's face it, **City of Death** could also have taken place in Blackpool so long as you've got an art gallery there"(!?!).

Nathan-Turner was also quizzed on the highly controversial **Mawdryn Undead** continuity mix-up. He replied: "I always said that continuity should be right. If you're going to do something or bring something back it should be right, unless it is to the detriment of the story. And in this instance I didn't want to set the story in '82 or '87 or what have you - I wanted to set it in the present day, going back. And in any case it was only ever stated by Sarah Jane wasn't it?".

In response to a comment that Tom Baker's Doctor in particular gave the impression that Time Lords have no romantic or (shock! horror!) reproductive qualities, Nathan-Turner gave a highly interesting response: "I don't know how you equate that with the Doctor/Grand-daughter relationship. My personal answer to the Hartnell thing is that the use of the words 'Grand-father' and 'Grand-daughter' were to allay suspicions from the teachers Ian and Barbara, and also in this country you have to be registered by a parent or guardian. So it seems to me that they arrived at Totters Lane, Susan wanted to go to an English school, and if he'd gone and said 'I am the Doctor, this is my companion, enrol her'. Do you know what I mean? That's the way I justify it, and as for their reproductive style, I mean, they must reproduce, otherwise there wouldn't be any young ones".

JNT was particularly proud with himself because of the extra money he had managed to obtain for the next (21st) season's production: "That's due to us nagging B B C Enterprises for three years, and finally they've given us some front money. I'm pleased with what we've achieved over the past three years, but this increase will mean that my production associate and I will not have to spend my life saying no to good ideas...the Cybermen cost a fortune. What I'm saying is that that amount of money used on **Earthshock** will be used again but it won't necessarily be a similar type of story...I'm not going to try and make everything in the same mould".

Q: So we won't be seeing **Buck Rogers**-type stories?: "Well, **Buck Rogers** and shows like that fall down because they're too obsessed with the effects and not obsessed enough with the characters".

Q: What were the 20th Season viewing figures like? Were they down?: "They were down, yes. Not very substantially, but they were down. The whole industry is down".

Now, it would not be unfair to state that Nathan-Turner was being just a little 'economical with the truth' here. A glance at the ratings analysis for the Davison years (ref:**DWB**#56) clearly shows not only an average drop of two million viewers between seasons nineteen and twenty, but also a relative decline in comparison with other programmes - Season Twenty stories being 20 to 30 positions lower in the chart than the previous year's output.

Almost inevitably, the subject of JNT's continuing tenure as producer came up. Was he worried that he might be becoming typecast?: "Do producers get typecast? I suppose they could probably. Although I've been lucky in that while I've been on the show we've achieved new things, whether they're for the better or not I'm not sure. We've opened up America and we're hoping to open up Canada. I don't think it's going to do my career any damage because when I started I was (and I think I still am) the youngest producer in the B B C, so I can't see it doing me any harm, but (laughs) five years will have to be it".

For DWM's 1983/84 Winter Special Jeremy Bentham had the novel idea of interviewing all nine of the producers to date (yes, there were eight people in the job before JNT!). Apart from the aforementioned comments on **The Five Doctors,** Nathan-Turner also spelt out again why he felt the show needed a new direction from the Graham Williams period: "The problem inherent with the kind of slapstick humour Graham instigated was that it tended to be picked up by staff and reflected in their work. In other words, if the show was jokey then I felt the sets too became almost cartoon-strip in style and the costumes adopted a sort of operatic humour to them. To me the humour of Tom's Doctor started to be reflected in the production values of the show and I wanted to change these to bring them much more in line with the 80's more sophisticated style of television...I think, inevitably, as a new producer when I took over I didn't want in my first year to employ anyone who might know more about the programme than I did. So for that year I veered away from directors who'd done the show before and created, if you like, my own repertory company of directors. That is not to say that since then I have not approached some of the older directors (but they've) either been unavailable or have not wanted to return to **Doctor Who** at this time in their careers. Additionally I am very keen...to encourage and develop new talent...because it is a necessity to find directors who are receptive to new techniques - who can do gallery sessions, use CSO and work with scripts of sixty-five scenes per half hour episode".

Winding up, Nathan-Turner explained his attitude to any possible film project for **Doctor Who** and the pre-conditions that would have to be agreed before any such movie got off the ground: "The possibility of a film has, several times over the last four years, reared its head but has so far fallen through. I think one of the problems is that because the B B C got its fingers burned with the sixties films - which the Corporation was not, as I understand it, happy with - my head of department is very keen that if there ever is a movie, I am to be very closely involved to the point where I would be an associate producer...one of my main reservations is they would have to use whoever is playing the current Doctor on TV, even if it's American money financing it...inevitably this has put some people off but it is something I am determined will happen sooner rather than later".

By the middle of 1984 JNT had become pretty adept at the old interview technique, so when the ill-fated magazine Space Voyager printed a three-part conversation with the newly-appointed Colin Baker, Nicola Bryant and Nathan-Turner in issue nine, the last section contained some familar phrases. There was the 'What a strain this job is' spiel: "It's not like producing any other programme. It really is hell for leather for 52 weeks of the year. First and foremost we have to make the programmes, obviously, but then there are all the peripheral activities - conventions, keeping in touch with the fans who write in, and merchandising", neatly dovetailing into the speech on the heavy responsibility involved in approving various cheap but profitable items: "As producer of the series I am effectively custodian of the B B C's copyright on **Who,** and check all merchandise ideas very carefully. I have to protect the show and the fans. For example, a manufacturer wanted to make **Who** darts. I felt that with their sharp points they wouldn't be safe in the hands of some of the younger fans and said no".

And no interview, of course, would be complete without the obligatory 'I'm not long for this job, you know' routine: "I've always tried to make good programmes. I wanted to do **Who** very much before I got the job - my own ego wouldn't allow me to work on a one million audience B B C2 programme. But the time comes for a new producer with new ideas. I've been very lucky to work with three of the six Doctors, Tom, Peter and now Colin. It has been all change this season with a new Doctor and companion and I have to bow respectfully to whoever thought up the idea of regeneration for the Doctor". However one small cloud did float across the page, in the form of a peculiar rumour that had begun to gain currency. Nathan-Turner was quick to "Quash firmly" such talk: "No, the show is not about to be axed. In pure financial terms it is far too successful".

It's hard to believe, but there was a time when John Nathan-Turner and **DWB** were on speaking terms, indeed the interview conducted in issues fourteen and fifteen was billed as 'A much needed opportunity (for JNT) to explain aspects of the series he is constantly criticised over'. The interview was conducted on the 28th August 1984 by Gary Levy, who didn't (surprise, surprise) shirk from asking one or two awkward questions, such as...

Q: In your first couple of years you stated that you would do three seasons after which you believed it would be a good time to call it a day. What made you change your mind?: "Basically the pressure from the various heads of department there have been over the years, and pressure on them from the controllers I guess...that they're reasonably happy with what I'm doing, added to which I think that when I took over the show I don't think I was quite as much of a fan as I am now for instance. I think in retrospect, when I took over I thought three years would be a nice time to stay - I could achieve something in three years and then it was time to move onto something else - but now it's become very much a part of my life and a part of my life which I thoroughly enjoy".

Q: Many fans nowadays argue that the longer you stay in the producer's seat the less ideas you will have to offer...some claim this will ultimately lead to the cancellation of the show altogether?: "I think there possibly is a danger of becoming stale. that's true. With regards to finishing the show I think that is absolute nonsense, I mean the show is so successful now, more so than it's ever been. It produces a lot of revenue for the corporation in terms of exhibitions, merchandising, novelisations, not to mention foreign sales. It has a healthy audience in this country and I don't think there are any plans whatsoever to finish it".

Nathan-Turner also expressed his disappointment that Peter Davison hadn't stayed on longer in the series: "I felt that Peter could have done at least one more year without running the risk of being typecast, but his reason was that three was his lucky number. He'd done three 'All Creatures', three of 'Sink Or Swim', three 'Holding The Fort' and felt he should move on. I was disappointed, yes...I know that Peter felt he'd got into his stride in that third season and it would have been nice to have consolidated that characterisation".

A point discussed briefly, with no real hint of its future implications (the reverse, in fact) was the imminent appointment of a certain Michael Grade to the post of Controller of B B C1. Gary asked Nathan-Turner if he knew what Grade's opinions were of the series: "You are talking constantly about criticisms about America and so on. I think one of the positive aspects of America is that Michael Grade has been in Los Angeles for the last couple of years where **Doctor Who** transmits so I'm sure he's aware of it and its popularity, and I think people are worrying unnecessarily about the future of the show. There will definitely be a **Doctor Who** season next year, that's already guaranteed" (this was presumably a reference to Season 22 already in mid-production).

The last thing Gary asked JNT was whether he had a special message for his critics: "No, I don't think so. Maybe it should be pointed out that I have had a few letters lately saying they are delighted the anti-JNT campaign is coming to its end, that the negative responses are now being far outweighed by the positive ones and one thing that leapt at me was someone who wrote in saying that as a fan of **Doctor Who** they felt they'd never had it so good, with out-of-time repeats, Longleat (for all its drawbacks), the massive amount of publicity that surrounds the show (and no show that keeps getting publicity like that can ever be cancelled). I think there's been more merchandise during the last five years (I'm not stating these myself, I'm quoting from a letter) and I have always had the general viewing public's interests at heart and I include within that the fans. There is no attempt to pander to the fans. There is an attempt to win audiences and to keep the show being popular".

Six months later, Michael Grade cancelled the programme quoting "Poor ratings"...

Written and compiled by Richard Fitzgerald

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Part Two Next Issue: 1985 - 1989

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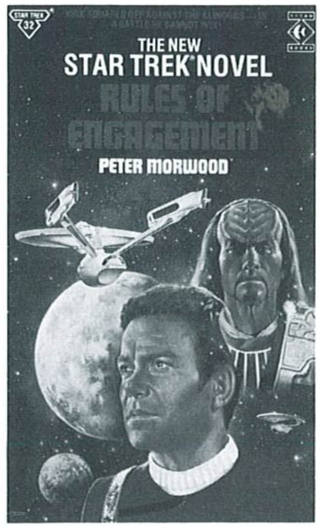
Doctor Who
No. 147
THE SPACE PIRATES
TERRANCE DICKS

V.



AS TARGET exhaust their supply of televised 'Doctor Who' material, thoughts are turning to the future of their 'Doctor Who' novelisation series.

It seems inevitable that the books will continue. The question is - in what form ? Personally, I believe the time is ripe for a radical reappraisal of Target's whole approach. It is time for the **Doctor Who** books to grow up, and W.H.Allen will find no better guide to what they **ought** to do than the excellent **Star Trek** and **ST:NG** novels currently pouring out of Titan books.

I've long held a sneaking admiration for the **Trek** books. Venturing into W.H.Smith's children's section to pay £1.99 for a flimsy Target offering, it's difficult to restrain envious glances at the 250-page **Trek** books, proudly stacked in the SF section alongside Asimov, Clarke and Herbert.

I finally succumbed to their allure after becoming hooked on **The Next Generation**, and discovering that Titan Books were releasing **ST:NG** books. These days, I await Titan's latest offering with a good deal more anticipation than I can muster over Target's. I've even dipped into the novels based on the original **Star Trek**, and been pleasantly surprised to find them as impressive as their **Next Generation** cousins.

Comparing Titan to Target might seem unfair. After all, Titan merely produce and distribute British editions of American books - they haven't the commissioning and editing duties of W.H.Allen. It's a fair point, and most praise for the **Trek** books' quality belongs to Pocket Books in the States, in particular to the series editor, Dave Stern. This doesn't, however, detract from Titan's packaging and marketing achievements, nor from my admiration of their willingness to gamble that there **was** a British market for quality **Trek** fiction.

Even on simply value for money, **Trek** books are far superior to Target's. For £2.95 Titan provide up to 275 pages of dense text. Target's £1.99 (soon to be £2.50) for on average 143, often in very large print and littered with empty spaces, is feeble in comparison. Titan seem aware that their readership consists mainly of the hard core of adult Trekkers who are willing to pay well for a quality product. Target, unfortunately, aim for a wider market of whose existence I am highly dubious.

It's always been argued that Target are a children's imprint, and that **Doctor Who** fans make up only a small proportion of their **Who** sales. The books have to be flimsy, otherwise they'd be too expensive for the kids. Personally, I don't believe this is true any more. Michael Grade was absolutely right when he said that **Doctor Who** had failed to capture a new generation of younger fans during the 80's. If the **Who** books are maintaining their sales figures, it is because there now exists a large adult fan market. Like their Trekker counterparts, they would be willing to pay more money **if** they got more value - so what have Target got to lose by producing thicker, more expensive, adult-orientated books ? They may even find **new** customers - after all, plenty of fans won't buy the books at present, because they're simply not worth it!

The higher page-counts of **Trek** books give their writers a great advantage - one notices greater complexity and maturity of style than is evident at Target. Descriptive passages are more detailed, plots more clearly developed and characterisations have greater depth. The **Doctor Who** books are skimpy in comparison - everything's done at speed. The **Trek** books are complicated, sophisticated **novels**. **Doctor Who** books are, in the main, superficial novelletes, and many superb writers have been noticably hampered by their restrictions.

Characterisation is the strongest point of the Titan/Pocket Books series, and in the case of **ST:NG**, the books have a distinct advantage over the shows. Geordi's view of the world, Worf's conflicting loyalties and Troi's empathic abilities are very difficult to fully convey on screen. On the page, they attain greater prominence, increasing our understanding of these characters. **All** the writers devote great effort to establishing the characters' distinctive thought processes, philosophies and motivations, thus creating three-dimensional individuals. For this reason, my favourite **ST:NG** novel so far is Peter David's magnificent **Strike Zone**, which perfectly captures **and** skilfully enhances the crew's natural chemistry. There's his perfect grasp of the Picard/Data relationship, his hilarious descriptions of Guinan's hats, and even a **likeable** Doctor Pulaski, as brusque and bolshie as ever but with a heart of gold which never came across on screen. The highlight, though, is the bit-by-bit psychological collapse of Wesley Crusher, culminating in a virtual nervous breakdown, which is done with great skill and pathos.

Of course, they aren't all brilliant. **Ghost Ship** suffers from being written before the pilot episode, so the characters aren't quite right - Diane Carey's cold and insensitive Will Riker is not the amiable character Jonathan Frakes has since fleshed out. **The Peacekeepers** was a nice idea, but Gene DeWeese's rambling style makes a plodding read. Like Jean Lorrah's **Survivors**, it centres on two characters isolated from the others, and proves that the new crew work best when they're together. **Survivors** has **too much** characterisation, concentrating on Tasha at the expense of the plot, and thus becoming dreary. **Masks** has a wholly uncharacteristic Picard, and **Power Hungry**'s inspiration is a mite too obvious.

However, there's Carmen Carter's **The Children of Hamlin**, an engrossing, pacey read, full of intriguing concepts and featuring a **very** alien race. **Survivors**, for all its faults, beautifully compliments TV's **Skin of Evil**...and there's Daniel and David Dvorkin's **The Captain's Honour**, centred on a fiendish in-joke for all Patrick Stewart's fans. Even the duller books have a plethora of moments which make them worth the read.

The maturity of approach even extends to packaging - with their appealing simplicity and uniformity, the **Trek** titles **look** like adult SF books. They are not cursed with a logo - the **title** is their dominant feature. The **ST:NG** books **do** carry the show's logo, but it is a simple, stylish and very adaptable one which always looks good on the covers and also adorns the spines beautifully. Titan's numbering system is less crude than Target's, and this, coupled with thoughtful choice of spine colourings and type-faces, makes the books look extremely impressive when stacked along a shelf.

The best **ST:NG** cover is the portrait of Tasha and Data which adorns **Survivors**, but the paintings are of a uniformly high standard. Only **Strike Zone** really lets the side down. Among the original **Trek** covers, my favourite is always **How Much For Just the Planet ?**.

Titling and logos never overwhelm these covers, and even the routine publicity blurb is subtle and less intrusive than on the US editions. Titan have performed a splendid repackaging job making the British editions far more eye-catching than their US progenitors. Target books are crude and unstriking in comparison, with ugly lettering and intrusive numbering, and even Alister Pearson's **finest** work suffers through being coupled with the hideous, glitzy Elmes logo. It's as well these offerings **are** shelved as children's books - amongst adult SF they'd stick out like a sore thumb!

Most appealingly, the **Trek** books are original stories, not just novelisations. After all, in the age of video, novelisations are almost redundant for purposes of reliving a story. True, they can include 'lost' scenes, clarify complex plots and expand scenarios, but totally fresh stories are still more interesting. It's odd that Target have only begun to explore the possibility of original **Who** fiction now that they have little alternative. It's such an obvious avenue, one must wonder why it wasn't done years ago.

First steps in this direction have been the 'Missing Episodes' books and the 'Companions' series. The former looks set to take in as many aborted original Season 23 stories as possible, but one wonders what happens thereafter. The B B C are already getting cold feet about publishing unmade stories (re: **The Masters of Luxor**), and they **may** have a point - afterall, there's no point in novelising stories which were rejected **because** they didn't work. However, I see no objection to the publication of stories which proved beyond the show's budget, or were lost to internal politics such as John Lucarotti's **Erik the Red**. There are enough promising but unmade stories, such as **Operation Werewolf**, to keep Target going for years.

The other obvious idea is completely original adventures. This would require tight editorial control and close liason with the production team, but the potential is too appealing to ignore. Writers would be free to write for whichever Doctor they prefer! And what other medium can give us **new** William Hartnell stories, **fresh** Troughton escapades, **original** Pertwee/Delgado encounters ? The Davison and Colin Baker eras cry out for expansion, and we could even have those hinted-at pre-Totters Lane adventures. Even that apocalyptic event, the arrival of Mel, could be explained! And, like the **Star Trek** novelists, writers can have infinite fun with sequels and prequels to televised stories.

Sadly, I fear commercial cowardice will prevent Target exploring the less obvious possibilities, in particular, stories which draw on **Who** mythology but don't actually feature the Doctor. Some of the best **Star Trek** books explore Starfleet history with only tenuous links to the Enterprise - one centres on Kirk's **father**! Others explore the **Trek** universe, characters' backgrounds and the Enterprise's own history. Target could pursue similar lines: Gallifreyan history could provide fascinating stories of Rassilon and Omega, the Time of Chaos, the Time Scoop and the Death Zone. The rise and fall of Morbius, culminating in the battle, trial and execution on Karn, also appeals. Many secondary characters, too, deserve their own books: Jago and Litefoot are the obvious long-mooted spin-off candidates, but how about Glitz and Dibber, Sil or Solon, Garron and Unstoffe ? Why not try a Castellan Spandrell whodunnit set on Gallifrey ? Michael Wisher has said that Davros' life story from birth up to **Genesis of the Daleks** would make a great SF novel, and he's right! Gerry Davis' **Genesis of the Cybermen** might also find its niche here. Hitherto the problem has been that the story of the Cybermen's creation is too gradual and large-scale to be contained within the format of a **Doctor Who** adventure - it would work best as an epic novel, **minus** the Doctor's intrusive presence.

What happened to various companions after they left the TARDIS is an obvious line, but it might be equally interesting to explore their lives **before** they met the errant Time Lord. Unfortunate;y Target appears to have dropped the 'Companions' series as a "failure". This seems a very short-sighted decision, taken with indecent haste before the series had a chance to establish itself. If the series "failed", target have only themselves to blame for launching it with the wrong book - Tony Attwood's long-winded piece of clever-dickery **Turlough and the Earthlink Dilemma**, whose 'Turlough' bore no resemblance whatsoever to the **Doctor Who** character of that name. Frankly, it should never have been published. **Harry Sullivan's War** is a far more worthy demonstration of what companion books could achieve. and Terence Dudley's **K9 and Company** novelisation is a better pilot for the Sarah/K9 format than its TV counterpart!

There **is** a market for these books, **if** written by the right people. The Attwood disaster only proves that tight editorial control is required to ensure that writers know what they're doing. Plenty of "the right people" **want** to write them: Victor Pemberton's Victoria book, Richard Franklin's The Killing Stone, Nick Courtney's Brigadier novel and Janet Fielding's Tegan story are there for the asking, but Target don't seem to want to know.

As Target enter the brave new world of original fiction I would urge them to bear the above in mind, to shake off their children's book image and adopt a freer approach to wordcount and pricing. More space is essential if writers are to do their ideas justice - skimpy descriptive writing is all very well when we've seen the TV version, but in a totally new work more detail is required. Good as **Nightmare Fair** and **The Ultimate Evil** are, they still seem cramped; atmosphere is often sacrificed to the need to tell the story in the required length. Certainly I doubt if my suggested Gallifreyan history epics could be told satisfactorily in 140-odd pages.

If Target are feeling **really** daring, they could even draw on fandom for new writers. There are many brilliant fan fiction writers who could write cracking good novels. One of the nicest aspects of the **Trek** books is that they feel like fan fiction in disguise, because many are penned by fan writers. Curiously enough, it is usually fans who display greatest flexibility to their idols. They know their chosen show inside out and are willing to test its limitations and push back its boundaries. They often take chances that a disinterested professional, only in it for the money, wouldn't dare. It's certainly true of **Doctor Who** - there's more originality of approach and shattering of conventions in fan fiction than ever Cartmel was responsible for. If Target can tap this rich vein of creativity, they'll find they're onto a winner. All it takes is the will to do it.

TIM MUNRO

DOCTOR WHO - THE SPACE PIRATES published March 1990 by W.H.Allen, Price £2.50
STAR TREK - RULES OF ENGAGEMENT published February 21st 1990 by Titan Books, Price £2.99

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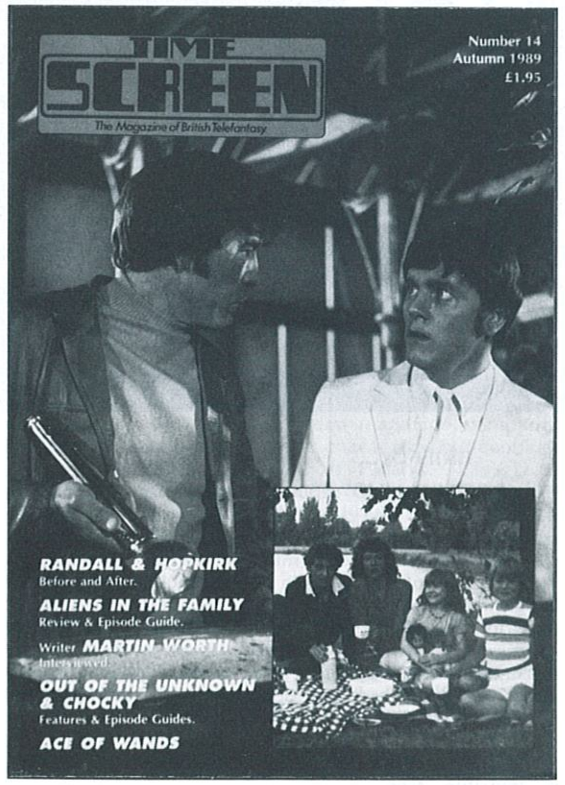

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ORIGINAL BATMAN AND KOLCHAK FOR NEW YEAR

AFTER THE HYPE of the Michael Keaton movie, plus the continual re-runs of the sixties TV series, a new form of 'Batman' for many will burst onto Channel 4 at Xmas.

"I'm an American first and always, and no amount of torture from your twisted Oriental mind will make me betray my country..." ran the dialogue of the original 1943 **Batman** 15-episode serial from Columbia, tightly directed by veteran Lambert Hillyer. In a country with strong anti-Japanese feeling soon after Pearl Harbour, all the bad guys suddenly became of Oriental origin, none less so than Doctor Daka, the gloating genius with the pet man-eating crocodile. The series features Lewis Wilson and Douglas Croft

donning the somewhat ill-fitting garb of the Dark Knight and Boy Wonder.

If successful it is likely Channel 4 will show the second serial, **Batman and Robin,** which followed in 1949, in which the duo - now comprising Robert Lowery and John Duncan - take on The Wizard, another evil genius who is again invariably armed with a remote-controlled device stolen from a luckless scientist.

BBC BUYS KOLCHAK

THE CLASSIC American comedy/horror series 'Kolchak: The Night Stalker (a.k.a. The Night Stalker) has been purchased by the BBC for screening some time in 1990.

This will be the first chance that most of the UK will have had to see down-at-heel Carl Kolchak in action.

After two highly successful TV movies (see video review on page 35) it was decided to launch a film series on the ABC network for the fall 1974 season.

The show premièred on 13th September 1974 with the episode **The Ripper** (a.k.a. Jack The Ripper - regrettably the series episodes often had two different titles!) which was a prime example of the show.

But **Kolchak** seemed to be met with total indifference in America, and when a new boss not sympathetic to fantasy series arrived at ABC, the show came off the air with its twentieth and final episode **The Sentry** on 28th March 1975.

In Britain, the show was largely ignored, but in the early 80's Central Television screened about a dozen episodes in late night slots on an irregular basis, and often with heavy cuts. SuperChannel, desperate for programmes after their inception had met with difficulties from Equity, selected a batch of episodes which were aired several times, and the two movies have also been seen on several ITV regions, with **The Night Stalker** finally getting a BBC2 networking in 1987. But this will be the first real chance for viewers to witness the magnetism of maybe the finest US show ever.

ANDREW PIXLEY

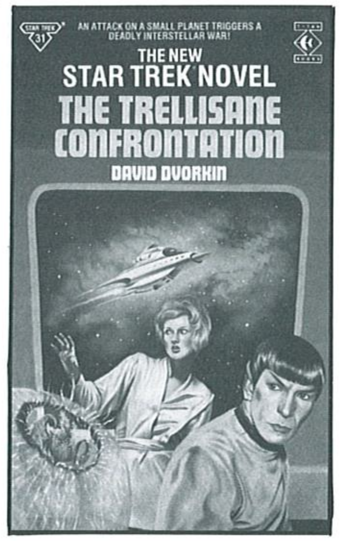
BRIEFLY...

WITH 'DOCTOR WHO' regularly falling out of the top 100 programmes, some other SF shows are currently performing better. **Land of the Giants** is pulling in enough viewers to put it in the lower reaches of the top 100, with **Beauty and the Beast** faring even better in its run of 'selected' episodes from the second series netting, on average, 7.4 million viewers placing around 55th position. **The Invisible Man** in the old **Buck Rogers** slot - once destined for **Blake's 7** repeats - has pulled in 4.27 million, placing it at number three in the BBC2 top 30, with the **Spiderman** faring even better at around 5 million placing the films firmly in first or second place. The new **Red Dwarf** series, also on BBC2, has clocked in with 4.29 million, while the **Prince Caspian** Narnia adaption on BBC1 is pulling 9.10 million making it the highest-rated fantasy series on TV at the moment.

MJ

A CLIP from **The Flipside of Dominic Hide** was shown on a recent edition of BBC2's Late Show to accompany coverage of Michael Tippett's new American opera New Year, of which it heavily influenced.

JHE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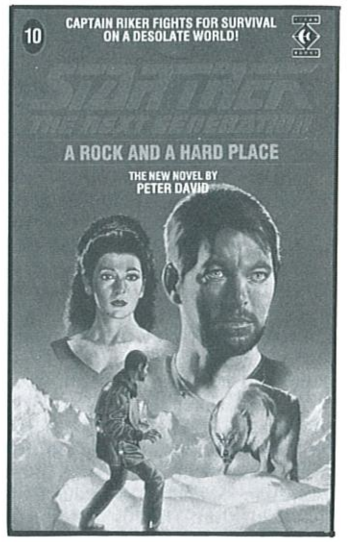
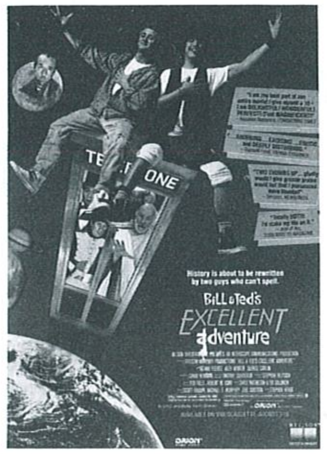
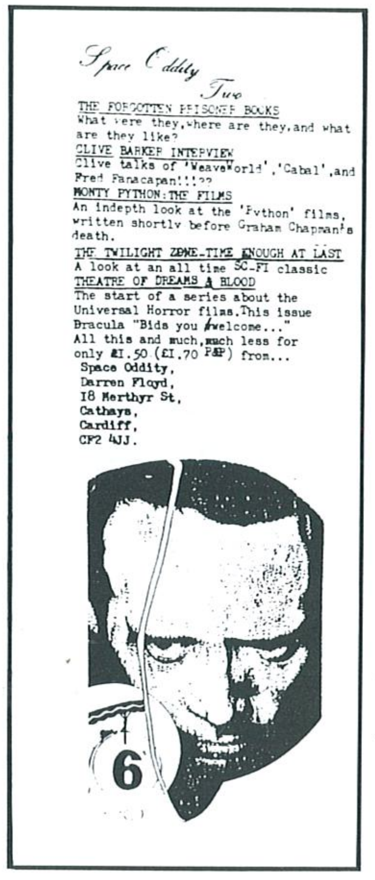

10
CAPTAIN RIKER FIGHTS FOR SURVIVAL ON A DESOLATE WORLD!
STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION
A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE
THE NEW NOVEL BY PETER DAVID

ABOVE are the Titan **Star Trek** novels for January, both published on the 21st and retailing at £2.95 each.

LINDA - Catherine - Hamilton is to be replaced by newcomer Jo Anderson who will play a character called Diana after she's killed off in the new 12-episode continuing story series of **Beauty and the Beast.**


History is about to be rewritten by two guys who can't spell.
Bill & Ted's EXCELLENT adventure

JUST when you thought it was safe to venture back into cinema houses, it has been announced that 'Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure II' is to enter production. The original film angered many US **Doctor Who** fans who felt it borrowed heavily from the BBC series. Judge for yourself above...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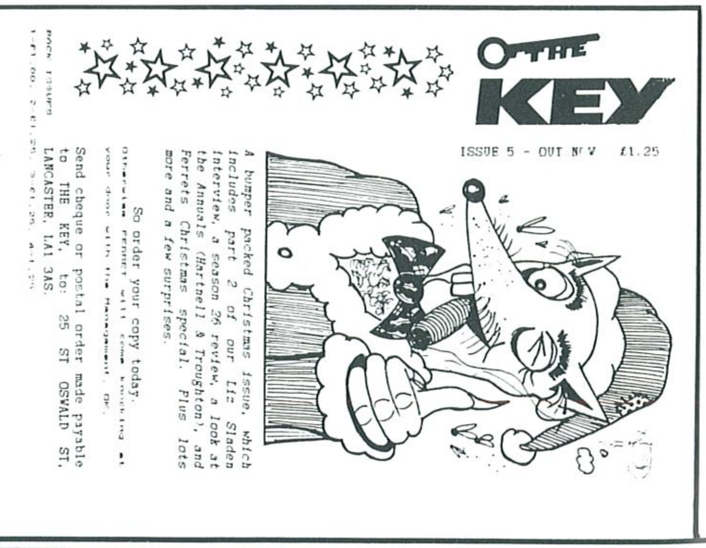
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ST:NG SEASON THREE PROGRESS REPORT

AFTER A RELATIVELY disappointing second season marred by a writers' strike and cast upheavals, 'Star Trek: The Next Generation' returned unexpectedly early this season for what has been a remarkably improved series thus far.

Starting in late September, **ST:NG** has reeled off nine straight new episodes (up to November 19th) without a repeat, which is a refreshing change from the previous season. More importantly, major changes in the writing staff seem to have produced such major improvement in the quality of scripts that it appears likely that this will by far be the best season that the series has mounted.

Part of the change may be due to a relaxation of pressure now that the series has produced enough episodes to begin to be profitable for Paramount. At a cost of $1.4 million per episode, the studio needed to be able to do a secondary syndication of the series in order to recoup expenses. It is now selling the earlier episodes to be shown as additional programming along with the new series. The result is that some stations now show **Star Trek** and **Star Trek: The Next Generation** episodes nightly as well as running the new season episode twice per week. One consequence of that success is that Paramount's distinctly less popular series, **War of the Worlds,** has been bumped entirely or relegated to odd time slots with little publicity on many stations while **ST:NG** is paired with the new Fox series **Alien Nation** on stations that are part of the Fox quasi-network. **ST:NG** is now the second most popular syndicated programme in the country, far outstripping any other drama series.

For the new series there were a few cosmetic changes. The title sequence, which was slightly altered last year, has been given a different slant on the galaxy that is rather more spectacular than before. The uniforms have also changed, though not as much as was originally rumoured. They are less tight-fitting and appear to be of a heavier material. They are two-piece but not obviously so. The major design difference is in the collar, which is higher than it used to be, and the shoulder area is now solid black.

Of course, the only cast change has been the return of Gates McFadden as Dr.Beverly Crusher, much to the delight of many fans who protested her removel after the first series. McFadden did not engage in any bitterness after her dismissal, which now seems wise, and spent her year off doing some theatre work in New York and also has a rôle in the new film The Hunt For Red October. But weep not for Diana Muldaur; she will be taking up a recurring rôle on the prestigious L.A.Law series now that Dr.Pulaski is no more. There was no explanation for her departure or for Crusher's return beyond the fact that Crusher was described as just going to Star Fleet Medical for a year instead of the permanent reassignment that she seemed to have accepted before.

The most significant change is simply in the quality and coherence of the scripts, and an encompassing emphasis on sound characterisation that has carried over from week to week. The departure of Maurice Hurley and Tracey Torme from the writing staff seems to have promoted this process as they were frequently at odds. Oddly enough, Hurley came to **ST:NG** after working as a producer and writer on the early (and better) episodes of The Equalizer. He has departed to the familiar haunts offered by the new Kojak series, for which he has written the opening episode. In his place there is the new "executive script consultant" Melinda Snodgrass and an executive story editor, Richard Danus.

Snodgrass is a former lawyer who took to writing romance and science fiction novels before being encouraged to submit her first attempt at a screenplay to **ST:NG** last year. That proved to be the highly successful **Measure of a Man** and she has been around ever since. She is a great admirer of Patrick Stewart so it is not surprising that Captain Picard has become the unquestionable centre of the series this season, although the other characters are getting good things to do, with the possible exception of Riker. After all, the more forceful and daring Picard becomes, the less there is for Riker to do other than hold up the scenery.

Snodgrass also noticed that Geordi was the least used character in the series and took pains to develop two episodes which have featured him. Troi also has become more central, although the problem for the writers here was that Gene Roddenberry does not believe that a 24th century crew would have the sorts of problems that her counselling skills might ordinarily treat. Instead she has been a strong adjuct to Picard in negotiating with aliens and advising him on pressures of command.

So far this season, Captain Picard has threatened to go to war with an alien race about to destroy a human colony; was on the verge of engaging in battle with the Romulans; and personally piloted The Enterprise out of danger in another episode.

Gene Roddenberry's favourite episode is, predictably, the Prime Directive drama, **Who Watches the Watchers,** in which a chain of circumstances involving a crisis at an observation post on a primitive planet leads to the inhabitants of the planet believing they have encountered a supernatural being called The Picard. It is hard to imagine the old **Star Trek** gang resisting the comic possibilities of such a situation, but this one is strictly serious as Picard is horrified by the potential damage from this cultural contamination. The fact that the problem was partly created by Dr.Crusher's humanitarianism recalls their conflict over the Prime Directive in **Symbiosis.**

Data finds he must go beyond rational problem solving in **The Ensigns of Command** and Geordi meets the perfect woman - on the holodeck - when he must find the way out of a **"Booby Trap".** Worf has grown into a major figure who is no longer just there to deliver delightful Klingon one liners, although those still crop up. In **The Bonding** he must cope with the death of a woman on an away team he was leading. He is angered with Troi's insistence that he must talk to her about his feelings, but he reveals that he has decided to bond with the orphaned son of his dead team member, much as he was adopted by a human after his parents were killed by Romulans. This extremely well-written episode also explores Wesley's feelings about his father's death and allows him to finally tell Picard how he has come to terms with that loss, a subject that Troi knows has bothered Picard for years as well.

But least you think Worf has become a good-mannered Federation officer following with the milk of humanoid kindness, in **The Enemy** Worf adamantly refuses to donate tissue which is the only means of saving the life of an injured Romulan officer, despite tha fact that this could mean war with an approaching Romulan ship. Although he spurns the Captain's plea to volunteer, Worf, being Worf, says that he will only comply if the Captain orders him to give the tissue. Picard, being Picard, he refuses to order Worf to do what he cannot do freely even if it means the possible destruction of The Enterprise. The greater depth of characterisation has made all of this work extremely well and it has given a texture to the series which now carries it easily through less interesting stories like the season opener, **Evolution.**

In a recent review of the series, Variety magazine complained about last season's flimsy plots and weak characters, but concluded that Patrick Stewart "soars" in the rôle of Picard. Clearly the revamped writing team has decided to bank on that strength while making The Enterprise into more of a family that can encompass even the passions of the Klingon heart. The good feeling being created may be getting out of hand - Wil Weaton is now being invited to some conventions!

The future appears quite open. Roddenberry does not want to focus on just the Romulans or the Borg as enemies of The Federation, and Snodgrass would like to reprise the mysterious invaders from **Conspiracy** in some way. She has some interest in romance for Picard, but Roddenberry is opposed to anything that would leave Picard with any wife other than his ship. He also disclaims any interest in a **Next Generation** film at the present time, although he is not insensible to the disappointing performance of **Star Trek V.**

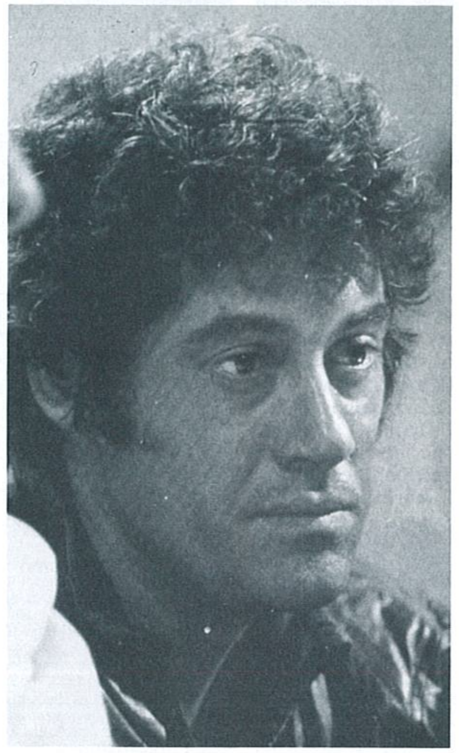
As long as the series continues to progress as it has so far this third season, it would be a shame to tamper with success to chase after the usually unsatisfying goal of a film hit.

KATHLEEN TOTH

PHOTO: Gene Roddenberry relaxes with ST:NG Season Three cast members Jonath Frakes, Patrick Stewart, Michael Dorn, Brent Spiner

"Somebody Up There's Casting!"

IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH GARETH THOMAS - THE ONE-TIME REBEL LEADER IN 'BLAKE´S SEVEN', BRIAN J. ROBB JOURNEYS TO GAUDA PRIME TO RESURRECT THE CORPSE AND UNRAVEL THE TORTURED HISTORY OF ROJ BLAKE...



GARETH THOMAS sometimes rues the day when he said "Yes" after being offered the lead part in the BBC's 1978 science fiction series 'Blake´s Seven'.

Since leaving the rôle in 1979 at the end of the second series, Thomas has had several television parts, including leading rôles in The Citadel, Morgan's Boy and By The Sword Divided, as well as stage work, such as a 1986 tour of Michael Frayn's Benefactors, but he is still best known as rebel leader Roj Blake.

Gaining the part was no problem for Thomas, who'd previously featured in a variety of TV series such as Stocker's Copper and Sunderland's Law: "I was asked to do it, it's really as simple as that. I think **Blake's Seven** creator Terry Nation had seen me in something and recommended me to the producer David Maloney."

Gareth Thomas is now the face of Roj Blake, but was he the first actor considered for the important title rôle in the series? "I'm fairly certain I was, although I can't be sure. I think Terry Nation was quite particular about who he wanted to cast. I don't know why he picked me. I can only imagine he was impressed or interested by something I'd done."

Blake's Seven was the most important science fiction series the BBC had developed since starting **Doctor Who** in 1963. Thomas was apparently not a big science fiction fan: "I very rarely read any science fiction, although the series was fascinating to work on."

The original cast, led by Thomas, Michael Keating and Paul Darrow were contracted for two series of the programme, so Thomas was guaranteed a couple of years work through 1977 and 1978, with the first two series' broadcast starting in January 1978 through to April 1979. Things didn't go smoothly in the beginning, however: "Although the series was fun to do, it was also damned hard work! There was immense pressure on the first two series which I worked on because the BBC didn't quite get their scheduling right. We were working the most unbelievable hours, often over-running the accepted television working hours."

Naturally, filming **Blake's Seven** had its fair share of mishaps, most of them seemingly involving Gareth Thomas and his co-star Paul Darrow, known on set as a pair of pranksters: "Lots of things went wrong all the time - and not all of them were funny! Paul and I were always cracking gags. Things didn't go right, in fact, from the very first time we did location filming together. Paul and I were standing on this rather muddy slope, and when the camera started turning we just started sliding, ever so slowly, down this slope as we played out our dialogue. Another scene required Paul to leap on to the back of a beach buggy thing which someone was driving and shout '**Go!**' He managed the running and jumping bit fine, but on the first few takes the buggy refused to go, and Paul tumbled over the back and onto the ground!"

Recording such a hi-tech special effects orientated series involved Gareth in many sequences involving explosions or camera trickery. While he enjoyed the action, Thomas believes the acting sometimes lost out to the attempts to impress with effects which were often risible: "The special effects blokes were nutcases, actually. They blew me right off my feet on one occasion. I was supposed to be running across a mine field and the mines were meant to go off either side of me. The effects guy responsible said 'Would you run across the field as fast as you can, so I can time the explosions?' I tried it, shifting fairly fast, and he was satisfied everything was going to go smoothly. I don't know if you've ever had this happen to you, but when an explosion goes off up your a*se you tend to move rather more quickly than you might normally! I was going along pretty damn fast, the explosions were getting out of synch, so the guy decided to let the final three off all at once. **Wham!** One went off in front of me, two right behind. The explosions literally picked me up and hurled me into a nearby hedge! Thankfully I was alright."

After all this, Gareth Thomas has got over his reluctance to talk about the series and, in particular, his reason for seemingly shunning a programme of which he was the title star. 'How could **Blake's Seven** carry on without Blake?', was the question being asked in 1979. The series did continue, of course, before being killed off, finally, in 1981. But why did Thomas jump ship so early on? "There were a couple of good reasons, actually, purely personal ones. I was contracted for two series and when my contract finished I decided not to renew, despite the BBC trying to be most persuasive financially. The series had an alternative lead character in Paul Darrow's Avon, so Blake wasn't such a great loss. My reasons were straightforward. First, I'd done 26 episodes and felt I couldn't take the character of Blake any further, as a character. Secondly, I did believe the series was going a little bit astray. It had started off as The Dirty Dozen in space, with real gutzy characters. By the end of the second series it had become tired. The Liberator was this giant spaceship which had this giant room full of wonderful clothes which just happened to fit us all. Things became easy for the characters. At that stage, too, the plots were descending into a kind of 'And with one bound they were free!' formula, whereas prior to that it had actually been quite a gutzy series, considering it was the BBC and the early timeslot. I mean, it was still a good series after I left. It just didn't suit me, so I got out."

Thomas wasn't that interested in the progress of his shipmates still fighting the Federation for two more series: "I only saw one episode - can't remember which. You see, I went direct from the series to working in the theatre as part of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Working in the theatre means you just forget television. I've never actually seen myself on the television at all, but that's largely through choice."

After much television work, including lead rôles - but nothing that gave him the following that **Blake's Seven** garnered - Gareth Thomas returned to the series for its final episode. He had good professional reasons for doing this, too: "**Blake's Seven** was becoming a bit of a millstone, actually damaging my career. Because the series was still going and still called **Blake's Seven,** producers thought I was still in it and so was unavailable for other rôles, so I wasn't getting work. I insisted in the final episode, **Blake,** that I had to be seen to be dead, finally. I wanted the character killed off once and for all."

Throughout the two series without Gareth Thomas, various explanations had been put forward in the stories for the fate of the absent title character, but the show carried on regardless. Paul Darrow's Avon took over as the leading character in the series, although he had competition from Michael Keating's comic thief Vila and Steven Pacey's square-jawed Tarrant. The one and only Roj Blake, though, was back in action for the controversial **Blake:** "I came in only for that one episode and hadn't been following it, so the main changes I noticed were the obvious ones. Glynis Barber had come in and Sally Knyvette had gone - she left along with me - and Steve Pacey had come in as a clean-cut hero type to balance Avon's complex character. I think the series had to end - it had run its natural course. There were only really two protagonists - us, the rebels, and the Federation in the form of Servelan. One or other, after 52 episodes, has got to win. There's a limit as to how far you can go without neither of them actually winning and neither actually losing. That's the reason the BBC ended the series. It was nothing to do with finance or viewing figures - after all, the final episode got over ten million viewers opposite Coronation Street. It was implied that the producers had decided they couldn't go anywhere else with it."

"A One-Off Film Would Be A Lovely Idea"

The BBC have released several episodes in butchered form on video and have been talking on and off about repeating the series at some point. Aside from that, there has been talk of reuniting the cast in a new series, or perhaps a film. Terry Nation is planning to try and float the idea as a series for American television, although in that case it's unlikely the old regulars would be cast (with the possible exception of Paul Darrow and Michael Keating). Would Gareth Thomas return as Blake, if a plotline could be worked out? "I don't think it's going to come back, actually, at least with the old cast, as we've all moved on now. A one-off film would be a lovely idea. That would be great fun! I'd have to dye my hair black again as it's since gone grey! There has been talk of it being done again with American money specially for American television. I don't think the BBC would be interested in doing it, and they wouldn't have the finance for a film either. Terry Nation is keen. I don't know whether he'd bring back Blake, but he'd certainly bring Avon back - he's become the important character. I'd certainly consider doing the rôle again for a film, but not for a television series - I've moved on too far now."

Paul Darrow, it seems, would be guaranteed a place in any revived American **Blake's Seven** series. On the original episodes Darrow had Thomas and himself precisely pegged, as Gareth relates: "He used to say 'I'm the pretty one, you're the actor', which became especially true as he gathered American women as devoted fans!" It's perhaps an indication of the seemingly inevitable decline in the series into its fourth season that the 'actor' had left and the 'pretty one' was still strutting his stuff in outer space.

Thomas would like to see some of the cast members reunited, though, as he believes they all worked well together: "Mike Keating is a very funny man and should have his own show. He'd be a great hit, I'm sure. Paul Darrow is one of the nicest guys around. Of course, Paul is just Paul - a great actor as long as he's playing Paul Darrow!

"The BBC Don't Have A Sense of Humour"

Doctor Who is perhaps the only other BBC science fiction series as popular as **Blake's Seven.** Gareth Thomas appeared alongside ex-**Doctor Who** Patrick Troughton in the TVS science fiction series **Knights of God:** "That was originally called 'Knights of Glory' when I worked on it. It was set in the future - a sort of updated Arthurian tale. I used to enjoy **Doctor Who** as a youngster. Nowadays I occasionally watch it when mates of mine are in it. I watched a few years back when Paul Darrow went into **Doctor Who (Timelash,** 1985) and played Avon all over again!"

With several other **Blake's Seven** actors having made appearances in **Doctor Who,** including Jacqueline Pearce and Michael Keating, has Gareth Thomas ever been tempted to follow suit? "I probably would take a part if offered. It would be enormous fun, I imagine. There was something I wanted to do with **Blake's Seven** and **Doctor Who** which the BBC refused to countenance. At that time Tom Baker was still doing **Doctor Who** and I had a plan which the two producers - David Maloney for us and, I think, Graham Williams from **Doctor Who** - were also keen to do. It didn't matter whether this was in **Blakes Seven** or **Doctor Who,** but what I wanted was for either the Doctor or Blake to be wandering down a corridor (there were a lot of corridors in both series, so it figured that at some point their universes must cross!). So Tom Baker and I would pass each other: 'Morning, Blake.' 'Morning, Doctor.' And that'd be it - we'd then get on with the story. We wanted to see how many people would clock it up! The BBC don't have a sense of humour, though, and spiked it. It would have been great fun!"

Lacking a part on stage, film or television at the moment, it's back to the dole queue for Roj Blake: "Yes, it's true. People seem to assume we get paid enormous sums of money. Unfortunately we don't. Well, a few do, the exceptions, but most working actors don't. Per hour, I suppose we do get paid very well, but there are long periods out of work when you're not making programmes and there's no money coming in. I'm probably in the top 20% of earning actors in this country and I can't afford a new car...so there you go."

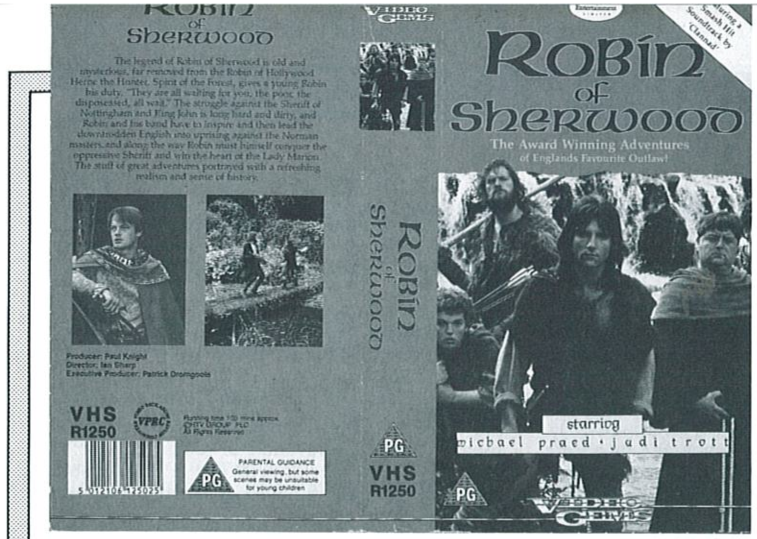
Having featured in small parts in some films, Thomas is keen to pursue this area of work: "I'd love to do a film. I've only been in very small parts so it's something I haven't done properly. It really doesn't matter to me, though, whether it's theatre, radio, television or cinema, just as long as I keep working. Doing a film would be a challenge. (Looks skywards) Do you hear that? Somebody up there's casting!"

With no work on the acting front, Gareth Thomas like many actors is looking into the possibility of directing: "I have directed some work in the theatre and enjoyed it enormously. It's very difficult to mix both acting and directing. Like acting, it's a question of getting that big break where people will give you work. A lot of actors want to move into directing and some have very successfully. I've never directed television. I think I'd prefer theatre as television is very technical rather than working with actors."

Blake's Seven conventions is an area where Paul Darrow has managed to keep the character of Avon alive, despite the series having ended over eight years ago. Fan gatherings, though, have never held a great deal of attraction for Gareth Thomas: "There are several reasons why I haven't gone to many conventions. I was in the Royal Shakespeare Company right after leaving the series, then went straight into another television series, so I was simply unavailable. I did go to one called Scorpio a few years back in the States. When I left, the series was still too close to go and talk about it. **Blake's Seven** was still being shown and I did want to divorce myself from it as much as possible, to get work as much as for any other reason, so I buried myself up in Stratford in the Royal Shakespeare Company and I didn't have much contact with anyone, really. There was another reason. I do a job, which I love, but I can't see why people put us actors on a pedestal. We're the same as everyone else, our job just happens to be seen by a lot of people. I don't like the system of billing, for example, of the actor's name going above the title of the piece. I don't think it's necesary because there are few actors who can put bums on seats. Yes, Michael Caine can, but run-of-the-mill actors just do a job."

Doesn't Gareth Thomas suffer fans gladly, then? "I don't get annoyed by fans because there is one very simple rule that an actor has to remember; anyone who asks for your autograph is paying your wages. That's the attitude to have, **always,** one should never be rude, no matter how ill you're feeling or bad-tempered or whatever, because they pay your wages! It can be a bit much, though, if you're having a quiet meal and someone storms up, bangs an autograph book on the table and demands you sign it!"

Whether we'll ever see the cast of **Blake's Seven** again - either as a new series or as repeats of the ground-breaking original - no one can underestimate the contribution Gareth Thomas made to the success of the original run. The ending of that last episode in 1981 is still controversial, but the one certainty to come from it is that Blake is dead. Gareth Thomas, however, is moving on to other things...


Robin of Sherwood
The Award Winning Adventures of Englands Favourite Outlaw!
starring
michael praed · judi trott
VHS
R1250
PG
Video Gems

review

LAST SPETEMBER saw the release (finally!) of the first 'Robin of Sherwood' video. Entitled, simply, 'Robin of Sherwood', the story within is in fact the pilot episode 'Robin Hood and the Sorcerer', originally shown in 1983.

Although a long time coming, 'Robin of Sherwood' will be warmly received by its fans, many of whom expected the release in 1985 as a bridge between the end of the third season and the screening of the proposed (but never made) fourth season. The sudden downfall of Goldcrest TV and film (co-financers of the series with HTV) put paid to that.

Releasing a TV video at this time, in a relatively untried market (it was 1985) may have proved a costly disaster, at a time when backs were already against the wall. An illustration of this need for immediate cash flow was the quick sell-off of the American rights for a pittance. It has subsequently been rumoured that Richard Carpenter (who created **Robin of Sherwood,** as well as **Catweazel, The Ghosts of Motley Hall, Arthur of the Britons, Smuggler** and **The Adventurer**) bought back the rights, and agreed a more realistic settlement.

In 1987 negotiations were afoot to release three videos in the US - 'Robin Hood and the Sorcerer', 'The Swords of Wayland' (aka 'The Hounds of Lucifer') and 'Herne´s Son' (the first Connery) all of which were feature length. Still nothing appeared in Britain. Rumours sprung up everywhere. One of these was that the cast were blocking a release because the money wasn't right. This was unsubstantiated. Cast costs were also blamed (by The Stage no less) for the non-appearance of expected networked repeats that year. In an effort to save money if the series had flopped, Goldcrest/HTV had agreed six episode contracts. Gatetarn - Richard Carpenter's production company - had wanted **52** episode contracts in order to guard against what inevitably happened. The actors demanded huge pay increases - Ray (Scarlet) Winstone ended up with a 200% pay rise for the this season - and Michael (Robin) Praed was able to leave when he wanted (and he did, for Dynasty!). Since Equity demands that actors are paid up to three times their original salaries for repeats, The Stage argued that repeats (especially of the third season) were a risk few TV companies were prepared to take.

Fan theories continued throughout 1987/8 as Carpenter tried to raise cash for a new **Robin of Sherwood** movie, and it seem increasingly likely that the future of the series lay in video...but when ? Early 1989 saw HTV announce that they intended to release **Robin of Sherwood** on sell-thru video. Come August the HTV publicity office were saying that releases were scheduled for January 1990. In September I was informed there were no plans to release episodes of **Robin of Sherwood** at present. Assuming something had gone wrong again, I returned to the waiting game...

September 8th saw the release of **Robin of Sherwood** four months early (by HTV's first estimate at least!). Herne be praised! However, on first receiving my copy, I stood aghast. It is the worst-packaged video I have seen in a long time. The photos adorning the cover are bland and **very** badly cropped (straight through Nasir's head on the front cover!). There is no cast list and the back cover blurb even mentions "the struggle against the Sheriff**...and King John**" (who doesn't **appear** in this episode!). The outside states **Robin of Sherwood** is 100 minutes long and rated 'PG'. The video itself declares it is 54 minutes in length (the same as an ordinary episode) and rated 'U'! It is, in actual fact, **104** minutes duration, but let's not split hairs. All this just goes to prove that ST:NG hasn't got it so bad (ref:DWB#72)!

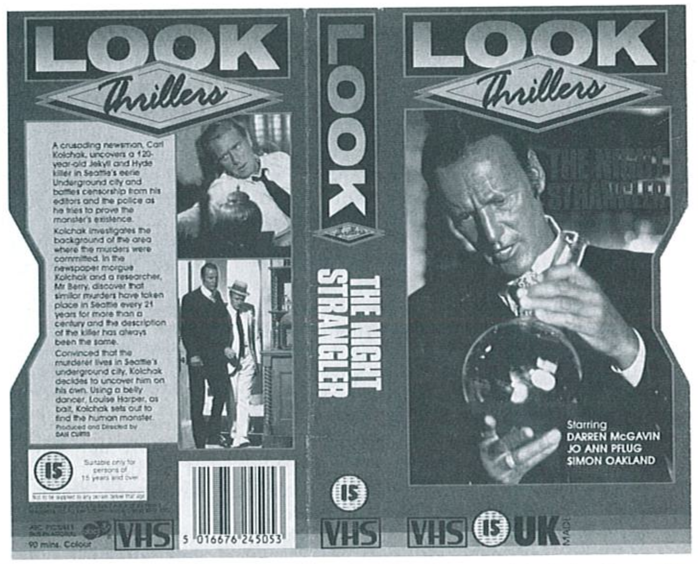
Making enquiries of Video Gems, the distributors, isn't easy. It's not that they weren't polite - it's just that no-one seemed to know **anything.** Eventually I discovered that there hadbeen a mix-up. Prior to classification, Video Gems had been told by HTV that the video would contain the first episode - episodes, they had previously been informed, are 54 minutes long. They were also told that **Robin of Sherwood** was a children's programme, and assumed that a 'U' would be granted as a matter of course. These presumptions only became a problem when something had to be stuck on the top of preview tapes (which by tradition are sent out with plain white covers). Having used the same stickers on the first production run of saleable videos, the mistake was realised, but by then it was too late. At least now you know whether you've got a first run copy or not.

On the positive side, the episode is a real gem, and has survived uncut (hence the 'PG' rating). Like **Doctor Who** it was never designed as a children's programme, but has somehow found its way into the category. In the beginning, Carpenter was assured it would go out after 7.30pm (the first series eventually went out at 6.30pm, the others earlier still) and so didn't spare the tomato sauce. Ailric's death is particularly gory, and identical to the way in which Michael Praed leaves the series - doing a very good impression of a pin cushion! The Baron also meets a nasty ending, but I won't spoil it for you. The acting is superb, the direction slick, the lighting subtle and haunting, the writing is witty and adventurous...the whole production is both timeless and refreshing. The music is wonderful - some of Clannad's best, and quite deserving of the BAFTA award it won. All in all a major edition to any telefantasy fan's library (it's just a pity about the cover!).

It is certain that Herne's son will roam the forest again, however. Video Gems plan to release the next four episodes (two episodes per tape) in February 1990. Well, even if they don't have a good graphic designer, at least they have faith...

ROBIN OF SHERWOOD **is released on the Video Gems label, price £9.99, code number R1250. Rated 'PG'.**

JOHN H. ELSON



ABSOLUTE BARGAIN is not a term to be used lightly, but when you're browsing around a Virgin Megastore on a Saturday morning and find one of your favourite and rarest TV movies for sale for under a fiver...well, you snap it up!

Who cares about the fact it's only in a cardboard printed box as opposed to a plastic one. This is the second pilot about the exploits of Carl Kolchak we're talking about here!

What ? You've never heard of Carl Kolchak ? The hero of probably the finest telefantasy series ever to emerge from the US of A, and soon to receive its UK première after all these years ?

In 1970, author Jeff Rice wrote a story called The Kolchak Papers, about a down-at-heel newspaper reporter who was the only man in Las Vegas to realise that a strange set of serial killings could be the work of only one sort of person. Yessiree, Las Vegas had a fully-fledged vampire on its hands; draining the blood from girls foolish enough to walk the dark city streets alone, strong enough to resist arrest by a crack SWAT team and consumed by the need for its life-sustaining plasma from any source. When Carl Kolchak tells the police commissioner that he'd better withdraw his men's firearms and issue them with stakes and mallets, he's treated as a crank. When he's caught hammering said stake into the chest of said vampire, well, it's time for Kolchak to pack his bags and get out of town. The book lay around unpublished, and found its way to the offices of ABC-TV.

On January 11th 1972, Richard Matheson's teleplay based on the book hit the airwaves in the Movie Of The Week slot. **The Night Stalker** scored the highest ratings of the season with **75 million** viewers, set a new television record for TVMs and scooped awards from the Writers Guild and the Edgar Awards.

On January 16th 1973, Movie Of The week screened the sequel to the huge success of the previous winter. The sequel was **The Night Strangler.**

As with all of Kolchak's exploits, the adventure is laced with humour, wonderfully real and yet outlandish characters...and the brooding darkness which hides a new horror for our intrepid newshound. Matheson's script takes Carl, so artfully brought to life by TV veteran Darren McGavin, and his ever ulcer-ridden boss Tony Vincenzo to Seattle. Seattle is a city which stands on a vast tombstone: another Seattle, the remains of a city which died during the fires of 1889 and was built over. And it is another ancient menace from the past which Kolchak finds himself engulfed in on his second outing.

Following what would have become a tried and tested format, a series of strange and related events occur. Here it is young women found dead with blood tapped off from the base of their skulls. Another vampire ? Well, Carl doesn't seem to think so. The eye-witness reports talk of a rotting corpse-like form being the attacker. But this corpse seems to be strong enough to evade heavily armed police units. And events seem to centre around a Seattle hospital, the foremost doctor of which bears an uncanny resemblance to a figure from the American Civil War. Again it is Carl who spots the deadly modus operandi of the supernatural force he is up against, but will the authorities listen before it is too late ?

The direction from Dan Curtis of **Dark Shadows** fame is excellent, and coupled with Matheson's superb script and the Jim Rockford-like narration from Kolchak himself, **The Night Strangler** is a delight to watch. The success of it spawned a series in the fall of '74 under the title **Kolchak: The Night Stalker** (a.k.a. **The Night Stalker**) where Carl faced werewolves, aliens, vampires, zombies, robots, demonic possession, a succubus, Indian bear gods...but that's another story.

THE NIGHT STRANGLER **is available on the Look Thrillers label, price £3.99, 90 minutes duration. Rated '15'.**

ANDREW PIXLEY

NOV/DEC REVIEW

CATS are back in vogue. Not the Andrew Lloyd-Webber mock opera variety, but those feline favourites of fantasy: the witches' familiar, the stealer of children's breath, the king of the beasts.

Three-quarters of all fantasy programmes on television in November/December featured cats! Cute cats, street-credible cats, incredible cats, stuffed cats, cats both menacing and menaced.

With Christmas and the New Year being the traditional time for summing up the year gone by and giving awards, here are the D W B Golden Cats of Montpurrr:

Slowest Cat on the Uptake: Vincent ('Beauty and the Beast') The most noble cat of them all is Vincent, the leonine ectomorph, but with a second season drawing to a close his affair with Catherine is still unconsummated.

This season hasn't lived up to the expectations kindled by the first. There have been a few good scenes, but it's mostly been a melange of romantic twaddle, moments of angst and much whispering. This season the drama and tension of the series has been provided by continuing villain, Paracelcus - hinted at being Vincent's father. Unfortunately, many of his episodes were deemed inappropriate for transmission at eight o'clock in the evening, thereby ruining his impact and presence in the series.

The third season is to be a continuing story taking place over 12 episodes. One can only hope that LWT doesn't continue its irresponsible and idiotic policy of missing out certain episodes. If they do, expect any future **Beauty and the Beast** to be nonsensically lacking in continuity.

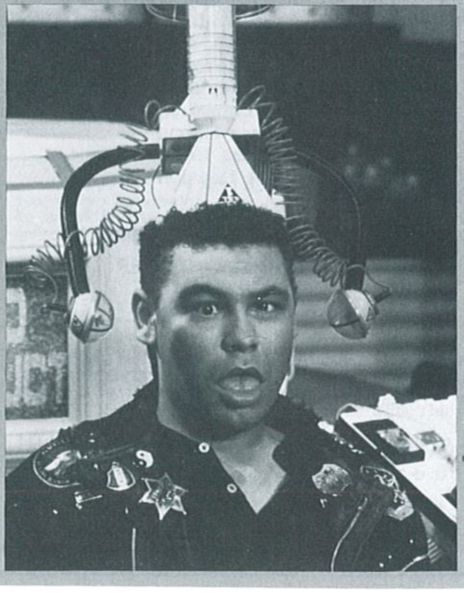
The last episode was billed as being about "a grotesquely-formed man brought to live in the New York netherworld". Vincent, perhaps ? So what's new ?

Coolest Hipcat: Cat ('Red Dwarf') That other anthropomorphic feline, **Red Dwarf's** Cat, is back in tip-top form as the coolest, hippest dude in the universe.

Red Dwarf has been given a fresh coat of paint for its third season with loads of whiz-bang special effects, a Captain Black uniform for Arnold Rimmer, a starring rôle for robot Kryten and a female version of computer Holly. This series certainly appears slicker, but one might wonder whether it was the rough and ready approach which made it a success the first and second times around. It's a little too early in this season to decide.

The first episode certainly opened the run with a bang, highlighting the old chestnut about time doing a quick about turn and running backwards when the universe has finally stopped expanding. Yes, the jokes were corny - only to be expected - but totally irresistable all the same. Apparently, there's a few jokes in there for anyone with a video recorder and enough patience to find out what the actors were saying when they were talking backwards. Question is, is anybody daft enough ? I'm sure they are.

If the season opener was a slice of spectacular effects based SF, then the second episode, **Marooned,** saw a return to basics. After the zappy opening, the majority of the episode consisted of the familiar sar-cats-tic interaction between the characters of Rimmer and Lister located in a single set. Thankfully our heroes were rescued by their ever faithful, and ever hip, moggy.



Worst Cat Impersonation Ever: The Master's TARDIS ('Doctor Who') As cat appreciation goes, **Doctor Who** should be sued for gross misrepresentation of the feline species.

If Danny John-Jules in **Red Dwarf** has Felix domesticus down to a tee, the stuffed abomination in **Doctor Who's Survival** should be relegated to the back street Chinese takeaway. Hale and Pace, already well known for microwaving pet cats, should perhaps move out of the corner shop market and set up selling Egg Foo Mog.

Cutest Kitten: Aslan ('The Chronicles of Narnia') C.S.Lewis's allegorical characterisation of God, Aslan, is turned into a cutesy-wutesy lion costume. The fate, thus far, of all the animals (and the children) in the B B C's Narnia adaptions.

After **The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, The Chronicles of Narnia** moves on to **Prince Caspian and The Voyage of The Dawn Treader.** Make no mistake, it's a noble effort and enough time, money and energy has been spent on the translation to make it look bloody good on screen. But these books are powerful fables, rich in symbolism and iconography, something the makers of the programme seem to have overlooked. Purrfect for a sleepy Sunday afternoon at the end of a long weekend.

Special Monty Python Giant Monster Pussy: Stray Tom ('Land of the Giants') Bound to make an appearance, this one. How could Irwin Allen resist ?

Taking over the **Lost in Space** slot, and proving to be just as popular, the mouse-sized passengers and crew of the crashed spaceship are menaced by anything that moves. And a lot of things that don't. The plots are predicatable, but then the same is true of its predecessor. Invariably, one or more Lilliputians get captured by giants and the rest of the party end up battling sewers, air conditioning systems, dogs, cats, criminals, maniacs and unrelenting scientists to rescue them.

It's a bit like making a miaowntain out of a molehill.

Most Inconspicuous Cat on Television: The Invisible Cat ('The Invisible Man') Not a lot of people realise this but David McCallum's cat jumped into the invisibility beam during his fatal experiment. Strange thing is, no one's seen it since! (More on **The Invisible Man** next issue).

SUSAN POLAN

PHOTOS: (Above) Aslan('The Chronicles of Narnia'), (Below) Craig Charles('Red Dwarf') BBC Copyright

'LAND OF THE GIANTS' SEASON 1 EPISODE GUIDE

FIRST SEASON (1968-69, 26 episodes)

Edpisode duration: 60 minutes/Colour

Regular Cast: Gary Conway (Steve Burton); Kurt Kasznar (Alexander Fitzhugh); Don Marshall (Don Erickson); Heather Young (Betty Hamilton); Don Matheson (Mark Wilson); Deanna Lund (Valerie Scott); Stefan Arngrim (Barry Lockridge).

Key: w.=Writer, d.=Director, lp= Lead Players

THE CRASH

w. Anthony Wilson
d. Irwin Allen
lp. Anne Dore, Don Watters, Pat Michenaud

PILOTS Steve Burton and Dan Erickson struggle to control their London-based spaceship as it passes through a mysterious cloud. The passengers and crew discover that they have landed in a world of fantastic proportions and escape dangerous encounters with a giant cat, a very large car and a petulant child.

GHOST TOWN

w. Gil Ralston, William Welch, Anthony Wilson
d. Nathan Juran
lp. Percey Helton, Amber Flower, Raymond Guth

IN a miniature toytown a sadistic giant child dumps a bucket of sand on our heroes, pours petrol in their direction and tosses lit matches at them, then tries to knock them out cold with a force shield - not a pleasant day for the little people!

FRAMED

w. Mann Rubin
d. Harry Harris
lp. Paul Carr, Doodles Weaver, Linda Peck, Dennis Cross

A giant tramp is framed for the murder of a photographer's model and it's up to our heroes to clear his name and see him released.

UNDERGROUND

w. Ellis St Joseph
d. Sobey Martin
lp. John Abbot, Lance de Gault, Jerry Carlton

A dangerous letter causes a giant leader of the political underground to enlist the help of the little people.

TERROR-GO-ROUND

w. Charles Bennett,
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Joseph Ruskin, Gerald Michenaud, Arch Whiting

THE earthlings suffer a terrible ordeal when they fall into the hands of a giant gypsy who plans to sell them to the circus as a freak show.

THE FLIGHT PLAN

w. Peter Packer
d. Harry Harris
lp. Linden Chiles, William Bramley, John Pickard

ONE of the giants is shrunk to miniature size and tries to use the space travellers to learn more information about Earth.

MANHUNT

w. J E Selby, Stanley H Silverman
d. Sobey Martin
lp. John Napier

THE little people risk losing everything to rescue a giant who is stuck in quicksand, but for a very good reason - their ship is stuck too!

THE TRAP

w. Jack Turley
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Morgan Jones, Stewart Bradley

BETTY and Valerie are captured by the giants, resulting in the remaining space travellers sacrificing some of their precious fuel to mount a daring rescue.

THE CREED

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell,
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Paul Fix, Henry Corden, Harry Lauter, Grant Sullivan

A giant doctor makes a spaceship call when Barry is diagnosed as suffering from appendicitis. He uses a magnifying glass to see what's going on and advises Steve on how to carry out the delicate operation.

DOUBLE-CROSS

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell,
d. Harry Harris
lp. Willard Sage, Lane Bradford, Howard Culver, Ted Jordan

FITZHUGH is stricken with amnesia. Forgetting who he is and his companions' predicament he helps two giants to steal a precious ruby.

THE WEIRD WORLD

w. Ellis St Joseph
d. Harry Harris
lp. Glenn Corbett, Don Gazzaniga

THE space travellers encounter the lone survivor of a precious space trip who has been living, of all places, in a gopher hole for several years.

THE GOLDEN CAGE

w. Jack Turley
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Celeste Yarnall, Douglas Bank, Dawson Palmer, Page Slattery

AN attractive girl is brainwashed by the giants and sent out to trap the little people. She almost entices Mark into betraying his friends and allowing thier capture.

THE LOST ONES

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Harry Harris
lp. Tommy Webb, Jack Chaplain, Lee Jay Lambert, Zalman King

THE lost little people come across more space travellers - this time a devious group of mistrusting delinquents.

BRAINWASH

w. William Welch
d. Harry Harris
lp. Warren Stevens, Leonard Stone, Robert Dowdell

STEVE is brainwashed and interferes with our heroes' attempts to destroy a newfound means of contacting Earth.

THE BOUNTY HUNTER

w. Dan Ullman
d. Harry Harris
lp. Kimberly Beck, Paul Sorenson

A reward is offered for the capture of our heroes alive! Before the giant bounty hunter arrives, the little people step up their efforts to repair their ship so that they can escape.

ON A CLEAR NIGHT YOU CAN SEE EARTH

w. Sheldon Stark, Anthony Wilson
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Michael Ansara

A wacky scientist and a peculiar pair of magic binoculars give the Earthlings some hope of returning home.

DEADLY LODESTONE

w. William L Stuart
d. Harry Harris
lp. Kevin Hagen, Paul Fix, Bill Fletcher

THE kindly giant doctor who helped during **The Creed** returns to help our heroes stay alive when a new detection system is developed by the giants.

THE NIGHT OF THROMELDINBAR

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Teddy Quinn, Michael A Freeman, Jay Novello, Alfred Ryder

TWO giant orphans come across our frantic heroes and mistake Fitzhugh for a magic orphan. Will his only escape be if he plays along with them ?

SEVEN LITTLE INDIANS

w. Bob and Wanda Duncan
d. Harry Harris
lp. Kevin Hagen, Cliff Osmond

CHIPPER, Barry's dog, is captured by giants and put on exhibition in the local zoo. Can our heroes mount an effective rescue or is the mutt doomed to be giggled at forever ?

TARGET: EARTH

w. Arthur Weiss
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Kevin Hagen, Dee Hartford, Arthur Franz, Peter Mamakos

A deal is struck between the little people and the giants. If Mark can repair their 'nuclear' guidance system, the giants will use it to send our heroes on their way back home to Earth.

GENIUS AT WORK

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Ron Howard, Jacques Aubuchon, Kevin Hagen, Vic Perrin

A giant genius develops a weird formula which, when Fitzhugh drinks it, makes him giant size and able to take on the little people's tormentors on an equal footing.

RETURN OF INIDU

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Sobey Martin
lp.Jack Albertson, Tony Benson, Peter Askell

IT's up to our heroes to prove that a friendly giant magician named Inidu is innocent of murdering another giant.

RESCUE

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Harry Harris
lp. Kevin Hagen, Lee Merriwether, Don Collier, Buddy Foster

TWO giant children are trapped in an abandoned shaft. There are no giants in sight so it's the little people to the rescue!

SABOTAGE

w. Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Harry Harris
lp. Robert Colbert, John Marley, Elisabeth Rodgers

OUR heroes are caught up in a struggle between a friendly giant and one who hopes to gain power from their knowledge.

SHELL GAME

w. William Welch, Bob and Esther Mitchell
d. Harry Harris
lp. Gary Dubin, Larry Ward, Jan Sheperd

WHEN offered their freedom, our heroes can't resist the challenge before them - to build a hearing aid for a giant deaf boy.

THE CHASE

w. Arthur Weiss, William Welch
d. Sobey Martin
lp. Kevin Hagen, Erik Nelson, Timothy Scott

OUR heroes agree to help Inspector Kobick trap underground freedom workers. In the process they discover Kobick plans to trap them, so they turn the tables and help the rebels to escape.

PHOTO: Stefan Arngrim, Kurt Kaszner, Don Marshall, Glenn Corbett (Courtesy of Channel 4)

ADVERTISEMENT

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1st .... 2nd.......................... 3rd ....

SEASON TWENTY-SIX OF 'DOCTOR WHO'

LIST EACH STORY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE (**Battlefield, Ghost Light, The Curse of Fenric, Survival**):

1st .... 2nd .... 3rd .... 4th ....

WAS IT AN IMPROVEMENT ON SEASON 25: Yes( ), No( ), Not sure( )

HOW DO YOU RATE SYLVESTER McCOY's PORTRAYAL OF THE SEVENTH DOCTOR: Brilliant( ), Good( ), Average( ), Poor( ), Abysmal( ), Other ....

HOW DO YOU RATE SOPHIE ALDRED's PORTRAYAL OF ACE: Brilliant( ), Good( ), Average( ), Poor( ), Abysmal( ), Other

....

HOW DO YOU FEEL THE TEAM OF SYLVESTER AND SOPHIE WORKS: Brilliantly( ), Effectively( ), Satisfactorily( ), Poorly( ), Atrociously( ), Other ....

DO YOU THINK THEY WORK BETTER WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A DRAMATIC NARRATIVE AS OPPOSED TO AN 'ODDBALL' ONE: Yes( ), No( ), Don't know( ), Other ....

HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP ANDREW CARTMEL's TENURE AS SCRIPT EDITOR: Excellent( ), Good( ), Fair( ), Poor( ), Abysmal( ), Other ....

WHY ....

'DOCTOR WHO' IN THE 80's

IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE, LIST YOUR THREE FAVOURITE STORIES OF THE 80's:

1st .... 2nd .... 3rd..........................

WHAT WAS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE 80's STORY:

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE 80's **DOCTOR WHO** COMPARED TO THE 70's: Better than ever( ), Continued excellence( ), Has changed with the times( ), Loss of direction( ), Bears no comparison with 'the goold old days'( ), A parody( ), Other ....

HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP JOHN NATHAN-TURNER's PRODUCERSHIP: Excellent( ), Good( ), Fair( ), Poor( ), Abysmal( )

WHY ....

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE JNT's GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT:

....

WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, WAS JNT's BIGGEST MISTAKE:

....

DO YOU THINK THE 90's HOLDS A BRIGHTER OUTLOOK FOR THE SERIES: Yes( ), No( ), Don't know( ), Other ....

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: ....

....

....

DREAMWATCH BULLETIN is Britain's première telefantasy news magazine. Every issue is packed with news, views, topical features and interviews, guaranteed to keep any true telefantasy addict completely informed!

Up to a year ago, D W B was known as 'Doctor Who Bulletin' - Britain's longest-running and most successful (and controversial!) 'Doctor Who' fanzine ever - but since extending our coverage to other fantasy-related shows, the magazine is even more popular! Understandably, the 'Doctor Who' content still dominates, by around 75% each issue, but then, there is no other science fiction series on British television with quite the enduring appeal of the world's longest-running fantasy show!

However you will also find extensive topical coverage of all fantasy-related series in D W B, particularly 'Blake's Seven', 'Star Trek' and 'Star Trek: The Next Generation', by far the most popular series as voted by our readers.

D W B is probably most renowned for always being first with the major news stories - often two months before anyone else! It was in last December's issue that we broke the news about the 'Doctor Who' stage play, The Ultimate Adventure, and we even suggested Season 27 of 'Doctor Who' would go independent - in July 1988! Even our current issue (D W B#73) is the first to include details of B B C Video's extensive line-up of 'Doctor Who' releases for 1990, plus it breaks the exciting news of the Gerry Davis Columbia/Paramount bid! We have also presented many exclusives on series as diverse as 'Blake's Seven', 'The Prisoner', and 'Beauty and the Beast'!

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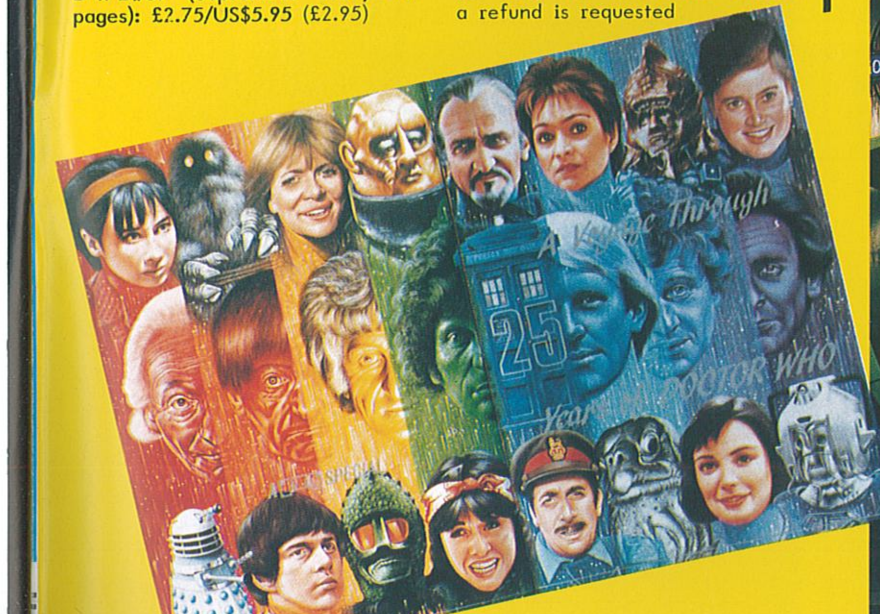

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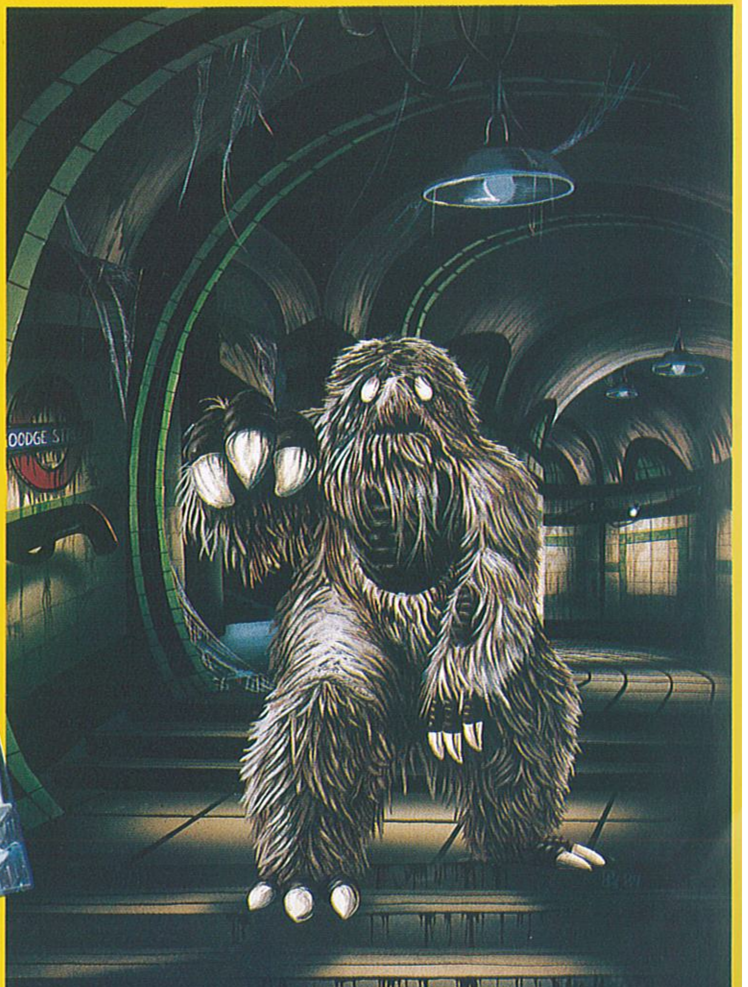

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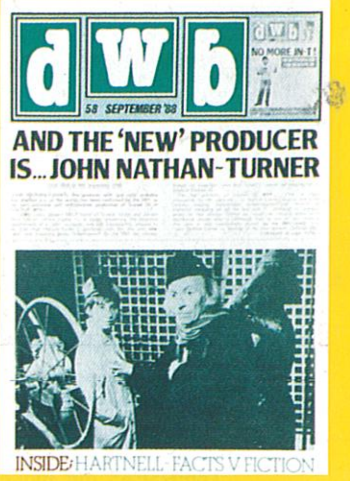
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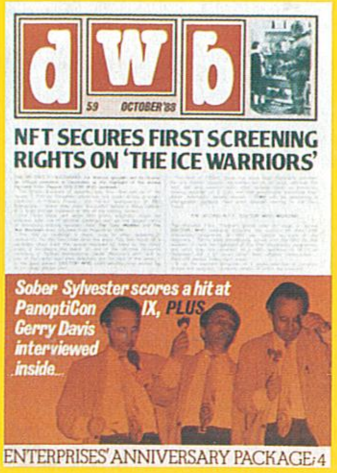
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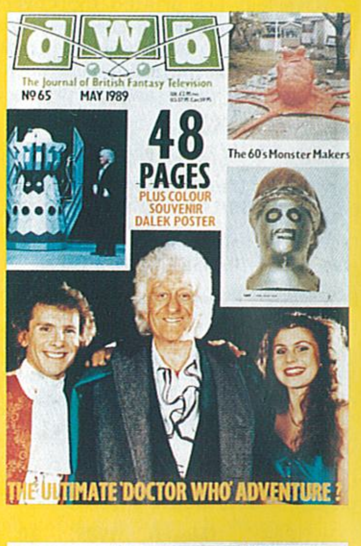
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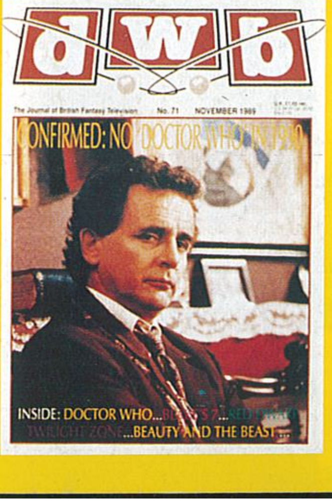
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